JEWISH -- ZIONIST TERRORISM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL.

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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THESIS

JEWISH -- ZIONIST TERRORISM

AND THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL

by

John Louis Peeke

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AND THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL

by

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CHAPTER 1 -- INTRODUCTION

Terrorist bombings of public buildings, attacks on public officials, hijackings and assassinations of political leaders are not new phenomena in Middle East politics. In recent history, incidents initiated by the Palestine Liberation Organization and its various components, the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine, Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Black September Organization, and now Black June, have captured headlines around the world through violent attacks against Israel and Zionism--attacks designed to gain support for an Arab Palestinian state. In its historical context, however, another terrorist war was fought over the same territory and for the same purposes--the creation of a Palestinian state. This time, though, the war was fought by Jews, for a Jewish Palestinian state and against Great Britain and her Arab "client" states. The significance of the Jewish terrorism and the philosophies behind it take on a new and more important influence in Middle Eastern affairs since the recent election of Menachem Begin, former terrorist organization leader, as Prime Minister of Israel.

This paper looks at the activities of the Jewish "terror" organizations, Hagana (Defense), Palmach (Commandos), Irgun (National Military Organization) and Stern Gang (Freedom Fighters for Israel), in their quest for a Jewish state. Through three

chronological, more or less parallel tracks, the paper will deal with the formation of these military and paramilitary groups, their organization, leadership, philosophy and actions which eventually forced Great Britain to yield to Zionist demands for a Jewish state in Palestine. The paper will also indicate the strong Zionist aims of these organizations with the purpose of providing some insight into the past, present and future actions of the new Israeli leadership.

With a tremendous amount of hindsight, one can see that the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 had its beginnings in the Roman conquest of the Judean state in the first century of the Christian era and the subsequent dispersion of the Jews throughout the world. The Jews of the "Diaspora," as the scattered nation was called, maintained themselves as special, separate communities, and were outcasts in every state in which they appeared. They were not allowed to participate in public life and given their tenacious grip on their unique political, religious, and economic characteristics, were exiled at one time or another in almost every European state.[1] Even in a liberalized 19th century Europe, Jews failed to become assimilated as Poles, Russians, English or French, but remained Jews. And throughout the dispersion the Jews never relinquished their claim on the Holy Land.

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[1]Peretz, Don, The Middle East Today, 2d Ed., p. 245, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, New York, 1971.

The most indicative of these ties to Palestine are the words of the closing prayer of the Passover festival, "next year in Jerusalem." Although Jews were resettling in Palestine as early as the 14th century, for the most part these people were apolitical; the immigrants were few and they were spiritually motivated.[2] While Western Europe was liberalizing itself in the 19th century, Eastern European and Russian "pogroms" against the Jewish population were driving Jewish immigrants to the United States and Western Europe. The widespread persecutions in the 1880s prompted creation of Jewish social "clubs" to alleviate the condition of Russian and Polish Jewry. The foremost club in the movement was Hoveve Zion (Lovers of Zion) which advocated immigration to Palestine to escape Russian persecution.[3] Only a small number of Russian Jews managed to settle in the Holy Land. The first of a very few settlements was Rishon le-Zion (First in Zion) founded in 1882.[4]

The modern politicization of Zionism is the result of Theodor Herzl, an Hungarian-born Jewish author, whose book The Jewish State, published in 1895, serves as the foundation for political Zionism. Greatly influenced by the rampant anti-Semitism provoked by the trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, Herzl realized the impossibility of satisfactory Jewish integration into European

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[2]Asprey, Robert B., War in the Shadows: The Guerilla in History, Vol. II, p. 768, Doubleday, New York, 1975.

[3]Peretz, p. 247.

[4]Ibid.

life. Herzl's book made Jewry aware that persecution would be a way of life as long as the Jews were a nation without a state (Theodor Herzl did not consider Palestine as the sole location of this state, he suggested Argentina as well). The Jewish State prompted much discussion, and, in 1897, Herzl convened the first World Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland. At this Congress the foundations of the World Zionist Organization were formed to "create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."[5] After the Congress, Herzl wrote "... at Basle I founded the Jewish State. If I were to say this today, I would be met by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in fifty, everyone will see it."[6] By the start of WWI, Herzl's Zionism had grown. A Jewish Colonial Trust and a Jewish National Fund was created to purchase land in Palestine for settlement by Jewish immigrants.

Prior to the First World War, the actual establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was a moot question. There was no "Palestine." The ruling Ottomans had divided the area between the Villayets of Beirut and Syria and the Sanjuk of Jerusalem. The "Sublime Porte" would not consider a new state carved from its Empire although immigration to Palestine was sanctioned. In 1905, Russian pogroms caused the migration of young socialist

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[5]Ibid, p. 249.

[6]Cohen, Israel, The Zionist Movement, p. 78, New York, 1945.

revolutionaries to the Holy Land. These new arrivals founded Hashomer (Watchmen) to protect their settlements from marauding bedouin warriors.[7]

The outbreak of WWI caused the Ottomans to tighten their control of the area and many Zionists were persecuted and exiled for being subversive. Immigration to Palestine ground to a halt.

In a series of complicated, confusing and conflicting agreements, Great Britain, in the prosecution of the war, promised areas under Ottoman control, especially Palestine, to Arabs, Jews, France and herself, thereby exacerbating the situation and creating a great portion of the current unrest in the area today:

1. The Hussein-McMahon letters, 1915-1916 (between Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner of Egypt and Sherif Hussein Ibn Ali of Mecca), spelled out terms for Arab entrance into WWI as allies of Great Britain.
2. The Sykes-Picot Agreement in the spring of 1916 divided the Ottomon Empire into Russian, French, British and Arab areas of influence or control. Originally a secret agreement, it came to light when the Bolsheviks took power in Russia and published the Czar's secret treaties.
3. The Balfour Declaration, 1917 (a letter from Arthur James Lord Balfour of the British Foreign Office to Lord Rothschild), agreed to British support for "the establishment in Palestine

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[7]Asprey, p. 70.

of a national home for the Jewish people," provided that "it [was] clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."[8]

The Hussein-McMahon letters follow closely the Damascus Protocol. This document, authored in 1915 by the Arab nationalist parties Al-'Ahd and Al-Fatat, defined the terms under which the Arab leaders would cooperate with Great Britain against the Ottoman Empire. This Protocol is quoted in full:

> "The recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the Arab countries lying within the following frontiers:
>
> North: The line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37° N. and thence along the line Birejik - Urfa-Mardin-Midiat - Jazirat (Ibn 'Umar) - Amadia to the Persian frontier;
>
> East: The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf;
>
> South: The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden, whose status was to be maintained);
>
> West: The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.
>
> The abolition of all exceptional privileges granted to foreigners under the Capitulations.
>
> The conclusion of a defensive alliance between Great Britain and the future independent Arab state.
>
> The grant of economic preference to Great Britain."[9]

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[8] Laqueur, Walter, (ed.), The Arab-Israeli Reader, 3d Ed., p. 17, Bantam Books, New York, 1976.

[9] Antonius, George, The Arab Awakening, p. 157, Putnam, New York, 1946.

The Hussein-McMahon correspondence modified these boundaries as follows:

> "The districts of Mersin and Alexandretta, and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab, and must on that account excepted from the proposed delimitation ...
>
> That, subject to the modifications stated above, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs in all the regions lying within the frontiers proposed by the Sharif of Mecca."[10]

These documents, from the viewpoint of the recipients, promised the Holy Land to the Arabs (McMahon Letters, 1915-1916), the French and British (Sykes-Picot, 1916) and to the Jews (Balfour Declaration, 1917). Conflict over the "rightful heir" continues to this date.

As a result of the Ottoman defeat in WWI, and agreements made at the San Remo Conference of 1920, Great Britain was given control over Palestine under a Mandate from the newly founded League of Nations on 24 July 1922. Article 2 of the Mandate specifically charges that Britain "shall be responsible for placing the country under such political administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of a Jewish national home ... and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants of Palestine, irregardless of race or religion.[11]

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[10] Ibid, p. 170.

[11] Laqueur, p. 35.

As a result of numerous factors including frustration with British duplicity in its dealings with Sharif Hussein, Palestinian Arabs attacked the Jewish population which had doubled between the turn of the century and the end of WWI. (In 1900 there were 40,000 Jews in Palestine; in 1917 there were between 67,000 and 85,000.)[12] The apparent effect of the Balfour Declaration was to increase Jewish immigration and alienate the Arab population. In 1920, Arabs attacked Jews in Jerusalem. In 1921, 1929 and 1930, Jews in Jaffa were attacked by marauding Arab gangs.

Arabs felt betrayed by the British who did not realize the force of rising Arab nationalism. A significant force in itself, Arab nationalism had become organized in the Turkish tradition through secret societies such as al 'Ahd and al Fatat (both of which were behind the Damascus Protocol). The Arabs took out their hostility on the British and their agents, the Jews.

Jewish opinion of the mandate was that its British administration was pro-Arab. The British, however, found themselves in a quandry because they couldn't defend the Jews without alienating the surrounding Arab countries. The Zionist view was that the agreements and statements of 1914-1917, had given the Arabs sovereignity over 99% of the land in the Middle East with the understanding that Palestine, representing about 1%, would be set aside for the Jews.[13]

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[12]Asprey, p. 768.

[13]Frank, Gerold, The Deed, p. 46, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1963.

British interests in the Middle East became evident to some Zionists authors:

> "The British wanted Eretz Israel because it lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, because it is the crossroads of three continents, because it dominates one bank of the Suez Canal, because it lies athwart the road to India ... and because it is a natural pipeline terminus for Iraqi and Persian oil."[14]

> "British policy was ready to back a great ideal which would enable Britain to take control of Palestine without seeming to. The ideal was at hand: the Jews to whom the Bible had promised Palestine, were persecuted and needed a home. The ideal was very appealing. Britain would promise the Jews a Home in Palestine. Not Palestine as a Home, but a Home in Palestine.
>
> But what if too many Jews wanted to go to Palestine? ... there were always the Arabs as trouble-makers.
>
> Thus was the blueprint evolved: the Arabs, when required, would "rebel" against the "foreign invasion;" and the Jews would be forever a threatened minority. Each would have to be protected against the other--by British bayonets."[15]

Other authors credit the Arab violence in the 1930s as a reaction not only to British rule, but to the British policy of a Jewish home in Palestine.[16] Immigration in the 1930s had increased the Jewish population in Palestine significantly.

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[14]Begin, Menachem, The Revolt: Story of the Irgun, p. 30, Shuman, New York, 1951.

[15]Ibid, p. 31.

[16]Center for Research in Social Systems, Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict, Volume II: The Experience in Europe and the Middle East, p. 59, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1967.

YEAR	IMMIGRANTS
1932	9,553
1933	30,327
1934	42,359
1935	61,458

(plus an additional 22,000 illegal immigrants 1932-1933. Vast increase in immigrants is a result of Hitler's rise to political power in Germany in 1933.)[17]

The wave of Arab nationalism crested in the Arab Revolt from 1936-1939. It was an off-again-on-again unrest directed as much against the British mandate as against the Jewish population.[18] The Jews felt, however, that they were on the receiving end of most of the violence. (This claim is not substantiated by British casualty figures.)

Typically, the 1936 wave of violence began after a seemingly insignificant event. On April 15, 1936, a Jewish-Greek immigrant on the road from Nablus to Tulkarm was set upon and murdered by a bedouin marauder. The funeral on April 19, sparked Arab-Jewish riots in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in which 16 Jews and 5 Arabs were killed.[19] David Ben-Gurion claims these riots were instituted by Hitler and Mussolini to divert attention from the Italian attack on Ethiopia.[20] Ben-Gurion also claims that

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[17] Ibid, p. 59.

[18] Hyamson, Albert Montefiore, Palestine Under the Mandate, 1920-1948, p. 136, Methuen, London, 1950.

[19] Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 67.

[20] Ben-Gurion, David, Israel: A Personal History, p. 47, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1971.

Neville Chamberlin used these riots to abrogate the Balfour Declaration.[21] Neither of these claims is substantiated.

Samuel Katz, a Zionist journalist, says that Great Britain, fearing a loss of influence in Palestine, caused by the increased Jewish immigration from Hitler's Germany, instigated the "Arab Revolt" of 1936 and controlled its direction so as not to endanger the perpetuation of British rule. Katz indicates the slogan of the Arab movement during this time was "Ad-dowlah ma 'anah,"--the government is with us.[22] This claim, too, is unsubstantiated.

The riots precipitated a general strike which was called on April 25th by the Arab Higher Committee led by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini. The strikers' demands were the termination of Jewish immigration; the prohibition of Arab land sales to Jews; and the establishment of a national representative government.[23] Through negotiation, the strike was called off on October. Violence again erupted in 1937 when the Peel Commission, formed to investigate the causes of the 1936 riots, made its recommendations.

According to the findings of the Peel Commission, Britain had failed in its mandate, and the mandate was impossible to fulfill. The underlying causes of the general strike and

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Katz, Samuel, Days of Fire, p. 8, Doubleday, New York, 1968.

[23] Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 68.

associated violence were the Arab desire for national independence, and the hatred and fear (by the Arabs) of the establishment of a Jewish National Home. Furthermore, the Commission stated that the three major provisions of the mandate (foundation of a Jewish National Home, safeguarding of the rights of the existing population, and establishment of self-government) were incompatible. The commission recommended the partitioning of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab State.[24]

The partition plan sparked Arab violence which continued into 1938. In that year, there were 5700 acts of terrorism in Palestine: 69 British, 92 Jewish, 486 Arab civilians and over 1000 insurgents were killed.[25]

By the end of 1938, violence had abated due to harsh but effective suppression by the British and because of British abandonment of the Peel Commission's partition plan.[26]

The British now shifted policy. On May 17, 1939, Britain published a White Paper which essentially met all the Arab demands:

1. Jewish immigration was to be limited to 15,000 per year for the next five years, at which time it would stop altogether unless the Arabs agreed to further immigration.

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[24]Hyamson, p. 138.

[25]Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 68.

[26]Hyamson, p. 143.

2. Purchase of land by the Jews was prohibited in some areas, restricted in others, and

3. A Palestinian State was to be established within 10 years.[27]

Jewish violence exploded when it became apparent that Britain had every intention of enforcing the White Paper. Jewish fighters attacked the British administration throughout Palestine. Only the fall of France in May, 1940, aborted the Jewish revolt--the defeat of Hitler became paramount. Ben-Gurion announced the position of the Jewish Agency:

> "The Jews of Palestine happen to be the only community in the Middle East whose very survival is bound up with the defeat of Hitler. We shall fight the war as if there were no White Paper; and the White Paper as if there were no war."[28]

With this brief outline of Palestine under the British mandate, it is now appropriate to return to the period between WWI and WWII and delve more deeply into the creation of three Jewish combatant groups: Haganah, Irgun, and the Stern Gang.

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[27]Asprey, p. 769.

[28]Litvinoff, Barnet, To the House of Their Fathers: A History of Zionism, p. 223, Praeger Press, 1965.

CHAPTER II--HAGANAH

The beginning of the largest Zionist fighting group, Haganah (Defense), dates back to 1907, when the first Jewish defense organization, Hashomer (Watchmen) was formed to defend Jewish lives and property against Arab thieves and marauders. The Hashomer were well-trained guards, nationally organized and subject to strict discipline. After WWI, Great Britain acquired control of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire, Hashomer disbanded and Haganah was established. The latter group was staffed by volunteers who trained sporadically and were less disciplined than the Hashomer. The task of Haganah was to defend Jewish settlements from Arab attacks "incited and organized by a central Arab political body."[1]

Haganah evolved from the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine which was administered by Great Britain. Article 4 of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine recognized

> "...a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home...and...to assist and take part in the development of the country."[2]

The Mandate further states that the World Zionist Organization "shall be recognized as such agency."[3] Until 1929, the Zionist

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[1]Ben-Gurion, p. 61.

[2]Laqueur, p. 34.

[3]Ibid.

Organization acted as the agency specified in the Mandate. The affairs of Palestine were conducted by the Zionist Executive, an elected body of Jews from the World Zionist Organization. After 1929, a separate Jewish Agency was created to facilitate Jewish immigration into Palestine; to advance Hebrew language and Hebrew culture; to purchase land in Palestine for the Jewish people, through the Jewish National Fund; to develop agriculture and settlement on the basis of Jewish labor; and to fulfill Jewish religious needs in Palestine without infringing on individual freedom of conscience.[4] The President of the World Zionist Organization was the President of the Jewish Agency.

Although the Haganah had no legal status and was not recognized by the British mandatory authority, it was tolerated by the British because its "aims were defensive."[5] Substantial control was exercised over the group by the Jewish Agency. The Haganah, therefore, reflected the views of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency leadership--Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion. They believed in a painstaking construction of the Jewish state on a step-by-step, immigrant-by-immigrant basis.[6] The theory was to build a permanent community under the auspices of the Mandate. The last thing the Jewish leadership wanted or needed was uncontrolled violence on the part of the

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[4]Levine, Evyatar and Shimoni, Yaacov (eds.), Political Dictionary of the Middle East in the 20th Century, p. 207, The Jerusalem Publishing Co., Ltd., Jerusalem, Israel, 1974.

[5]Center for Research in Social Systems, op cit, p. 71.

[6]Begin, p. 47.

Jewish community, the Yishuv. Such an occurrence would demonstrate to the British mandatory authority and the world as a whole that the Jewish people were incapable of governing themselves in their own homeland, and that the Jews constituted a threat to the Arab population in Palestine.

Haganah was directed by the National Command, which was comprised of equal representation of the Histadruth and Citizens' Union parties. The National Command did not, however, always exercise effective control over individual units.[7] The Jewish Agency and the Haganah preached the doctrine of self-restraint or havlagah which allowed for defense of the Jewish community in the face of Arab attacks, but did not allow for retaliation for the violence. After the Arab violence of 1920 and 1921, some members of Haganah and WZO felt the official Zionist policy of havlagah was not appropriate.

An intellectual emigrant Russian Jew named Vladimir Jabotinsky, accompanied by his followers, broke with the World Zionist Organization and formed the Zionist Revisionist Party.[8]

Jabotinsky demanded retaliation for the Arab attacks and the immediate creation of a Jewish state within the boundaries of "historical Palestine."[9] This schism in world Jewry will be developed in following chapters as the Revisionists evolved into

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[7]Ben-Gurion, p. 59.

[8]Brank, p. 47.

[9]Ibid.

the Irgun Zvai Leumi, then split again and created the Stern Gang. Both organizations were active in Palestine during WWII and the immediate post-war period, disappearing in 1948, after the creation of the State of Israel.

The espoused aims of Haganah were to prevent anti-Jewish attacks, provide adequate defense for the Jewish community, to cause the Arabs to forsake terrorism as a political tactic, and to put an "end to the Arab terrorists' arrogant self-confidence and sense of impunity."[10]

The Arab attacks during the revolt of 1936-1939 caused Haganah to reevaluate its tactics. The "stockade principle" of havlagah was not sufficient deterrence to the Arabs; therefore, the National Command decided to train and arm Haganah under the eyes of the mandatory authority and to conduct punitive operations outside the "stockade." Small groups were to venture out of the settlements and retaliate for attacks by Arabs. The retaliatory and punitive actions program was organized for this purpose. Called p'ulat meyuhadoth or simply "Pom," the first known action was in 1939. Farm workers in the settlement of Ramat Yohanan had been attacked by an Arab gang which then fled through the Arab village of Sa'sa'. Haganah intelligence learned the attackers had been fed and housed by the village chief or

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[10]Mardor, p. 4.

mukhtar. In its first act of retaliation, "Pom" blew up the mukhtar's house.[11]

Concurrent with the 1936-39 Arab Revolt, Haganah Command tightened its control over its combatants and Special Night Squads were organized in conjunction with the British to retaliate against the Arabs. The Jewish squads were equipped and trained by the British under Captain Charles Orde Wingate. Initially, 2800 Jews were enrolled as constables by the British to combat the Arab insurgents. This number eventually rose to 5000 at the peak of the violence. In 1936, Haganah strength was 10,000, including reserves.

Three separate organizations within Haganah appeared in the late 1930's: Mosad, Shai and Palmach. The Mosad was centered in Paris. Its primary concern was the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine via Mediterranean ports. The driving impetus behind this flow of people was the rising fear of Hitler's Germany. As WWII became imminent, other factors were to come into play which were to increase Mosad's activities. The White Paper of 1939, which restricted Jewish immigration and land purchases at the same time Hitler was persecuting the Jews, forced Mosad into complicated illegal immigration techniques and the name was altered to Mosad le Aliyah Beth--committee for illegal immigration.[12]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Sykes, Christopher, Crossroads to Israel, p. 221, The World Publishing Co., Cleveland, 1965.

Shai was Haganah counter-intelligence. Although operating primarily against the British in Palestine, it also gathered intelligence on Arab opponents. By 1947, Shai had infiltrated every aspect of the Mandatory Administration with a force of over 2000 members.[13]

Palmach was the striking arm of Haganah. Comprised of about 3000 men, women and youths, the Palmach were regular, salaried commandos.[14] These left-wing Zionists were led by Moshe Sneh, who was succeeded in 1946 by Itzhak Sadeh. The Palmach led the British invasion in 1941 to flush the Vichy government out of Syria and Lebanon. Palmach also planned for the Jewish defense of Palestine in the event that Rommel's North Africa campaign was successful.[15]

In addition to these three main arms of Haganah, there was Ta'as, the illegal arms industry. Scattered throughout Palestine in cottage-style industries, Ta'as built bombs, grenades, made ammunition, refurbished firearms and "acquired" arms from various sources.[16]

The events of 1936-1939, the Peel Commission report and the White Paper of 1939 combined to cause an explosion in the Jewish community. The White Paper had served to reduce immigration

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[13]Special Operations Research Office, Undergrounds in Insurgent, Revolutionary, and Resistance Warfare, p. 334, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1963.

[14]Ibid, p. 336.

[15]Litvinoff, p. 263.

[16]Mardor, p.15.

just when it was most needed to relieve European Jewry from the impact of Hitler's attacks against the Jews in Germany and Austria. The immediate Zionist reaction was an increase in clandestine immigration and an expansion of Haganah. The primary mission of Haganah became the support of immigration, and Haganah's targets became any force which prevented or worked against immigration.[17] Because the British were using police and military troops to prevent this unauthorized immigration, Haganah soon found it necessary to oppose force with force. As one author said, Haganah was forced by the White Paper "to rid itself of all squeamishness about the use of arms."[18]

In March and April of 1939, three boats from Germany were sent down the Danube to the Black Sea. The Jews on these boats were sent by the Gestapo in order to relieve Germany of their presence.[19] They were prevented from entering Palestine by the British White Paper and were returned to Germany. The tremendous frustration of the Yishuv gave rise to continual attacks and demolitions against the British presence in Palestine. Police stations were attacked and law courts were blown up. In the summer, Haganah destroyed the pipeline between the Kirkuk and Mosul fields of the Iraqi Petroleum Company and the port cities of Haifa and Tripoli.[20] On August 8, 1938, Sinbad II, a 60-ton British coast guard vessel enforcing the blockade on Jewish

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[17] Ibid, p. 23.

[18] Ibid, p. 18.

[19] Sykes, p. 221.

[20] Mardor, p. 30.

immigration was sunk by a bomb planted by a Haganah crew-member. At least one British sailor was killed.[21] The five months of illegal immigration, which ended in June 1939, bought in 15,000 "illegals." Of these, 4500 were bought in by Haganah, 3500 by private means and 7000 by the Revisionists.[22]

Throughout the Haganah violence, unnecessary loss of life was a prime concern. In his book, Haganah, Mardor heavily stresses the philosophy of avoiding casualties on both sides wherever possible. Discussing the attack on Sa'sa'

> "This was in accordance with the high command's decision that we should avoid doing bodily harm to any of the village people...We herded them into the building and warned them not to leave it...Our main reason was to prevent anyone from being injured by flying debris when we blew up the mukhtar's house."[23]

Anti-British activity on the part of Haganah ended when Britain became a participant in WWII. The Irgun Zvai Leumi split over the issue. David Raziel's and Menachem Begin's faction followed the lead of Haganah until 1944 when the British government rejected the Biltmore Program of Weizmann and Ben-Gurion. A second faction, led by Abraham Stern, split to form Lokhammei Herut Israel (Freedom Fighters for Israel or FFI) which has become better known as the Stern Gang. It was Stern's contention that the struggle against the British should continue during the war.[24] During the early phases of the war,

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[21] Ibid, p. 29.
[22] Katz, p. 43.
[23] Ben-Gurion, p.137.
[24] Asprey, p. 772.

therefore, Haganah efforts were to prevent deportation of illegal immigrants and to aid those illegals who wanted to enter Palestine.[25] As the war progressed, Aliyah Beth's activities were forced by simple logistics problems to fall off sharply.[26]

Haganah did attack British installations during the war, but only when British operations interfered with the illegal immigration activity. Sabotage in refugee camps and bombing of radar sites (used to locate refugee ships) were frequent.[27] The World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency wanted to prevent, at all costs, a feeling in Great Britain that the Jews were fifth columnists stabbing Great Britain in the back while Britain was at war with the common enemy--Hitler.

One anti-British incident during the war, the destruction of the refugee ship Patria, was clouded in controversy. In November 1940, 3500 illegal immigrants from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia arrived in Haifa Bay on three ships, the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Milos. The British authorities decided to deport 1900 of the immigrants aboard the Patria. Haganah felt that such a precedent was dangerous and could not be allowed to occur. On November 25, 1940, a mine blew a hole in the side of the Patria which burned and sank quickly. Two hundred and fifty

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[25]Mardor, chapters 8 and 9.

[26]Ibid, p. 85.

[27]Special Operations Research Office, op cit, p. 344.

refugees were killed aboard the ship or were drowned when it sank.[28] The Jewish Agency immediately claimed it was a mass suicide in protest of the deportation.[29] In reality, it was a planned attempt to damage the Patria thereby preventing its scheduled sailing. A miscalculation on the part of the Haganah demolition man, Munya Mardor, caused decidedly more damage than was intended. Mardor feels that the prime cause of the tragedy was the poor condition of the Patria which resulted in the bomb damaging the ship much more than was planned.[30] The sinking of the Patria and its subsequent loss of life was to return to both Britain and the Jewish Agency in 1944 as motivation for the assassins of Lord Moyne.

The Jewish Agency and Haganah knew that the Yishuv would soon have a tremendous need for arms. Palestine Jews were volunteering to fight Hitler in the British Army. There was fear that this might induce Arab attacks on undefended Jewish settlements. If Germany were successful in the North African campaign, the Jewish Agency feared Britain would abandon Palestine for a defensive line in Iraq--at the same time abandoning Palestine Jews to the Germans. Finally, the Jews felt that if the allies won against Hitler, there would be undeniable Arab demands for an end to the mandate.[31]

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[28] Mardor, p. 72.

[29] Sykes, p. 226.

[30] Mardor, p. 72.

[31] Ibid, p. 119.

Sources of arms for the Yishuv were raids against the British Army camps, ordnance bases and police stations,[32] illegal purchases from Arabs, including members of the Arab Legion (which continued until the Arab "invasion" of Palestine in 1947),[33] and smuggling and clandestine production (Ta'as).[34] Care was taken to acquire only those arms which would not lead to accusations of Jewish damage to the war effort. This consisted primarily of weapons in the small arms categories: rifles, pistols, light and heavy machine gun and submachine guns, plus quantities of explosives and ammunition.[35] The new name, Rekhesh, was given to the arms acquisition organization and a front organization, the "Flower Growers' Association," was created.[36]

The White Paper of 1939 was evidence to a great number of Jews that violence on the part of the Arabs was a successful ploy against Great Britain. The riots and strikes of 1936-1939 had resulted in a Mandatory policy which met Arab demands. On May 11, 1942, Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion, signaled a change in Zionist policy. The Biltmore Program, as it was known, condemned Great Britain and the 1939 White Paper for a "breach and repudiation of the Balfour Declaration."[37] The Program called for a Jewish Army under a

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid, p. 125.

[34] Special Operations Research Office, p. 340.

[35] Mardor, p. 121.

[36] Ibid, p. 119.

[37] Laqueur, p. 79.

Jewish flag to fight Hitler. It demanded that the Jewish Agency be put in control of immigration and development in Palestine with the specific purpose of establishing a Jewish Commonwealth.[38] The Biltmore Program marked a drastic change in the policy of the World Zionist Organization by calling for a Jewish State rather than the Jewish home mentioned in the Balfour Declaration. The Biltmore Program closely reflected the statements of Revisionist leader Jabotinsky in his deposition to the Peel Commission in 1937.[39] It was Britain's refusal, in 1944, to accept the Biltmore Program which caused the Irgun to renounce its wartime truce with the British and resume its attacks on the Mandatory government.[40]

By the end of the war, Haganah had increased its 10,000 man force and began to step up activity against the 90,000 man British Army.[41] Jewish units with the British Army smuggled British and captured German arms from Egypt and the western desert into Palestine.[42] The British "mustered-out" 300 trained Jewish officers who immediately joined Haganah or other Jewish military groups.[43] Soldiers from Jewish units in the British Army infiltrated refugee camps and searched the remote corners

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid, p. 58.

[40] Asprey, p. 773.

[41] Special Operations Research Office, p. 334.

[42] Mardor, p. 155.

[43] Special Operations Research Office, p. 336

of Europe for survivors of Naziism. These soldiers had enlisted with the mission of locating Jews and bringing them to Palestine. They contributed to the war effort, trained Haganah troops, and were a source of supplies for Haganah.[44] The end of WWII marked an end to Britain's war with Hitler. In Palestine, Britain's war had just begun.

During the war, the out-of-power Labour Party in Britain had been vocal in its support for Zionism. The elections in July 1945 were, therefore, hailed as a victory for Zionism when the Labour Government under Clement Atlee gained control of Parliament. Upon assuming office, however, Labour officials found briefs from the Foreign Office, War Office, Palestine Government, Colonial Office and the Middle East Office which said in effect:

> "The Arabs in the Middle East were the key to the maintenance of Britain's position there; dire perils would follow if their goodwill was lost by accepting the Zionist outlook; nothing should be done that would further antagonize the Arabs."[44]

Unable to make a decision, the Labour Government fell back on the principles of the 1939 White Paper.

Yishuv frustration exploded. The White Paper was bad enough in 1939, but after the war and the revelations of the Nazi horror, any attempt to keep Jews out of their "rightful

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[44]Kimche, Jon, Seven Fallen Pillars: The Middle East 1915-1950, p. 141, Secker and Warburg, London, 1950.

homeland" was unthinkable to the Zionists. There was increased support for terrorist tactics in the conservative Jewish Agency and the National Council (Vaad Leumi).[45] Even the previously restrained Haganah became violent.[46] David Ben-Gurion, Dr. Weizmann and other Jewish Agency Executive members began talks in London with Prime Minister Atlee and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin aimed at changing British policy on Jewish immigration. In Palestine, Haganah began attacking British internment camps where illegal Jewish immigrants awaited deportation. On October 10, 1945, the Palmach liberated 208 interned illegals from Athlit detention camp. One British soldier was killed during the attack.[47] An half-day strike was called in Palestine to protest the Labour Government's action, and there were demonstrations in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem. On the 11th, the military camp at Rehovath was raided and 200 rifles, 50 submachineguns and 200 bayonets were stolen by the Rekesh.[48]

In a series of telegrams between Palestine and London, the Jewish leadership decided that a "single serious incident" be created to raise the morale of the Yishuv and signal Jewish resolve in Palestine.[49] In a telegram dated September 23, 1945, Moshe Sneh of the Jewish Agency in Palestine proposed to Ben-Gurion in London that

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[45] Hyamson, p. 157.

[46] Litvinoff, p. 241.

[47] The Times, London, 11 Oct 1946.

[48] The Times, 12 Oct 1946.

[49] Sykes, p. 282 and The Times, 24 July 1946.

> "It has also been suggested that we cause one serious incident. We would then publish a declaration to the effect that it is only a warning and an indication of much more serious incidents that would threaten the safety of all British interests in the country, should the Government decide against us...The Stern Group has expressed their willingness to join us completely."[50]

On October 12, Moshe Shertok, Jewish Agency Executive member and head of the Political Department wired Ben-Gurion's assent to the plan to Bernard Joseph in Jerusalem.[51] On October 31, Kol Israel (Voice of Israel) proclaimed the existence of the Jewish Resistance movement. Haganah, Irgun and Stern Gang agreed to cooperate against the British in order to force the British to give up the League of Nations (now United Nations) Mandate.[52]

On the night of 31 October-1 November, the Palmach blew up the Palestine railway system in 153 places, destroyed 3 police launches in Haifa and Jaffa; the Irgun attacked the Lydda train station and rail yards, killing a British soldier; and the Stern Gang attempted to blow up the Haifa refinery.[53]

The "single serious incident" provoked the British government into forming another committee of inquiry.[54] By now this tactic had become a familiar British method of dealing with unrest in Palestine. This time, though, the British elected

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[50] The Times, 24 July 1946.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Sykes, p. 283.

[53] The Times, 24 July 1946.

[54] Sykes, p. 283.

not to "go it alone" and brought the United States into the problem. Thus was formed the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. As the committee was convening, violence by the Resistance Movement was stepped up. On November 25, the police coast guard stations at Sidna Ali and Gavat Olga were blown up.[55] On Christmas night, the Haganah brought 220 refugees ashore on Naharya beach north of Acre. Two drowned in the landing when one of the launches capsized.[56] On December 27, there were seven bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Police CID headquarters were the targets; three British constables and nine Jewish terrorists were killed.[57]

On January 13, 1946, 70 Jews derailed a train outside Haifa and stole the railway payroll of £35,000.[58] Two days later, a warehouse watchman was chloroformed and ten tons of nitrate of soda was stolen in Tel Aviv.[59] On the 20th, Assistant Superintendent of Police Elson and a Royal Army captain were killed in a raid on the Palestine Broadcast Studios. There were numerous incidents in the Old City on the same day. Also on the 20th, the Coast Guard station at Givat Olga was attacked and 18 police and soldiers were injured.[60]

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[55] The Times, 26 November 1946.

[56] Kimche, p. 165.

[57] The Times, 28 Dec and 29 Dec 1945.

[58] The Times, 14 January 1946.

[59] The Times, 16 January 1946.

[60] The Times, 21 January 1946.

On January 28, British High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Allen Cunningham, imposed the death penalty "on any persons convicted of being a member of a terrorist gang--any group of persons, any of whom have committed offenses contrary to the new defense regulations." Life imprisonment was decreed for unlawful wearing of a military uniform.[61] (It is significant that all the Jewish combat organizations made almost constant use of disguises such as military and police uniforms, and Arab clothing to carry out their surprise attacks against the British. Rekesh used disguises to great length when "procuring" weapons from army depots. On January 28, 200 machineguns were stolen in a raid on an RAF camp at Aqir. The raiders were disguised as RAF soldiers and were driving stolen RAF trucks.)[62]

The Jewish Resistance Movement was a product of many factors already discussed: refusal by Great Britain to recognize the Biltmore Program, strict British adherence to the 1939 White Paper, and the intense and still growing feeling in the Yishuv that a Jewish state was necessary if the Jewish nation was to survive.[63] As a consequence of these factors, the High Commissioner's warnings and promulgations had very little effect.

Jewish raids continued and increased in their ferocity and effectiveness. On February 20, the radar station at Mt. Carmel

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[61] The Times, 29 January 1946

[62] Ibid.

[63] Katz, p. 70.

was blown up by Haganah.[64] On the 26th the three major Jewish defense organizations attacked the RAF airfields at Qastina, Petah Tiqva and Lydda. Seventeen "Halifax" bombers were destroyed at Qastina, seven "Spitfires" were destroyed at Petah Tiqva, and two "Ansons" were destroyed at Lydda. A resistance radio broadcast said the RAF was attacked because it was detecting illegal immigrants on the high seas and was responsible for transporting "illegals" into exile in Eritrea.[65]

Throughout April, 1946, attacks continued against the British. Railway bridges were blown up, police stations attacked and army camps were raided. On April 25, 1946, the Stern Gang attacked an army car park (motor pool) in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, killing seven British soldiers in their sleep.[66] Anti-Zionist feeling in Parliament rose to a crescendo as MPs denounced the murders.[67] On the 26th, off-duty British troops ran amok through the outskirts of Tel Aviv. They broke up twelve houses and beat a number of the Jewish inhabitants.[68] On the 28th, Major General Cassels, commander of the Lydda district, imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on Tel Aviv. In a letter addressed to the acting Mayor of Tel Aviv, Mr. E. Perelson, the growing anti-Jewish feelings of the British surfaced:

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[64] The Times, 21 February 1946.

[65] The Times, 27 February 1946.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Sykes, p. 294.

[68] Ibid.

> "I have received your message of regret but have sent for you today to say how horrified and disgusted I am at the outrage committed by Jews on the night of April 25...As a result I have decided to impose certain restrictions on the Jewish community as a whole to maintain public security and because I hold the community to blame."[69]

On the last day of April, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry released its report and its recommendations. One hundred thousand immigrants were to be allowed entrance to Palestine immediately.[70] This number became the rallying cry for the Zionists. Kol Israel on the 3rd of May said the Jewish Resistance Movement "would keep the peace if 100,000 Jews, as recommended by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, were permitted to enter Palestine."[71]

Foreign Secretary Bevin rejected the report. By the end of April, Great Britain had come to regard the Jewish Agency not as the administrator of the Palestine mandate, but as the High Command of the Jewish rebellion.[72] Haganah continued to boast of its attacks on the British presence as it had done throughout all of 1946. Ben-Gurion continued to deny the existence of Haganah and to deny any Jewish Agency relations with the group.

In June, 1946, the attacks against the British continued unceasingly. More trains were derailed and destroyed. On the

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[69] The Times, 29 April 1946.

[70] Laqueur, p. 86.

[71] The Times, 4 May 1946.

[72] Litvinoff, Op cit, p. 244.

16th and 17th of June the Resistance Movement destroyed almost all the rail bridges in Palestine,[73] including the major links at Azzeb, Metullah, Wadi Gaza and the Allenby Bridge.[74] The terror narrowed its focus on the 18th when the Irgun kidnapped five officers from the British Officers' Club in Tel Aviv.[75] On the 22nd a plot was discovered to kidnap General Officer Commanding Palestine and Transjordan, Sir Evelyn Barker.[76] Twenty-two aircraft were destroyed in a single attack on a single airfield in late June.[77]

The British had taken all they could. British forces entered the offices of the Jewish Agency on June 30 and arrested all of the leading members of the Agency and interned them in Latrun detention camp.[78] Jon Kimche, British historian says there was "no real attempt to get at the terrorists" and the attack on Jewish Agency headquarters was "an all out attempt by Great Britain to destroy the moderate leadership of the Jewish Agency and humble Palestine Jewry."[79]

Its effect was worse than that. The attack almost destroyed the activities of the Haganah and Palmach. Over 4000 Haganah,

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[73] Kimche, p. 167.

[74] The Times, 18 June 1946.

[75] The Times, 19 June 1946.

[76] The Times, 20 June 1946.

[77] Asprey, p. 776.

[78] Kimche, p. 170

[79] Ibid.

Palmach and Jewish Agency members were arrested. (Katz' figures, London Times, 1 July 1946, claims only 2000 members were detained for questioning.) The Jewish Agency surrendered. Except for two operations in August, 1946, and one in July, 1947, the Haganah took no further part in the armed struggle against the British in Palestine.[80]

The struggle did continue, however. Haganah and the Jewish Agency concentrated on building a framework for the new state. They directed their activities toward immigration and acquisition of arms for the coming war with the Arabs. Immigration became the main cause of Haganah, and the Anglo-American Commission's magic 100,000 figure was hurled again and again at the British government. In the United States, President Harry S. Truman seized on "the 100,000" and virtually ignored the rest of the Commission's report. In August, the remainder of the Jewish Agency Executive met in Paris and called off the armed struggle against Britain.[81] Ben-Gurion would now try diplomacy and compromise to win the state of Israel from Great Britain.[82] In October, many of the Jewish Agency leaders were freed by the British in return for their aid in combatting the Irgun and Stern Gang.[83]

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[80]Katz, p. 92.

[81]Ibid, p. 294.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Ibid, and The Times, 6 November 1946.

With but few exceptions, the Haganah took on the role of military arm of the Jewish Agency and abandoned terrorist attacks. Haganah became the core of the Israeli Defense Force. The State of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948; on May 31, Haganah, 35,000 strong, officially became the IDF.[84]

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the military events of the 1948 War and the Arab-Israeli actions immediately preceding the declaration of the state, except as those actions take on the character of terrorist operations rather than traditional military operations. Thus, major Jewish operations such as Haganah's efforts to secure the road to Jerusalem; the Irgun's conquest of the Manshieh Quarter of Jaffa' and the combined campaign effort to liberate the Old City of Jerusalem fall into the military realm.

Haganah did not, however, cease its military operations with the partition of Palestine. After the United Nations vote on November 29, 1947, Arab violence against the Jews was stepped up.[85] Haganah began covertly guarding Jewish public transport against Arab attacks. The British, still present in Palestine and responsible for preventing Arab attacks, wanted no quarrel with the Arabs, they simply wanted to withdraw peacefully. British Army escorts for Jewish buses frequently sped away from

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[84]Center for Research in Social Systems, op cit, p. 418 and Handel, Michael I., Israel's Political-Military Doctrine, p. 11 Howard University Center for International Affairs, Washington, July, 1973.

[85]Mardor, p. 226.

their charges and left them vulnerable.[86] Thus, the illegal Haganah guards.

On December 7, Arabs went on strike to protest the partition of Palestine. There was rioting in the Jewish sectors, Arabs mobs attacked Jewish shops, looting and burning as they went. Haganah complained that the British were not attempting to maintain order and were preventing the Haganah from doing so.[87]

Two weeks after the partition vote, volunteers of the Arab League states entered Palestine. The British did little or nothing to prevent armed Arab units from entering Palestine.[88] The need for arms for the Yishuv became even more obvious as an Arab-Israeli War became a foregone conclusion. Although some Haganah leaders, such as Moshe Sneh, felt the main struggle was a political battle directed against the British for their failure to execute the terms of the mandate, Ben-Gurion's faction, more fearful of the Arab-Israeli confrontation, won out and the search for weapons to arm the Yishuv intensified.[89] Ben-Gurion replaced Sneh with Sadeh as the Haganah commander.

As early as May 1945, Ben-Gurion had gone to the United States seeking arms. With the help of American Jewry, he returned; not only with arms, but with an entire surplus weapons

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[86] Ibid.

[87] The Times, 3 Dec 1947.

[88] Mardor, p. 241 and Ben-Gurion,op cit, p. 65.

[89] Ben-Gurion, p. 61.

manufacturing plant.[90] By April 1947, Haganah had 10,073 rifles, 1900 submachineguns, 186 Bren guns, 444 machineguns, 672 two-inch mortars, 96 three-inch mortars, no heavy artillery, no armor, no transport, no air force and no navy.[91] The United Nations had also imposed an arms embargo on Palestine which the British were enforcing aginst the Jews while British arms were being shipped freely to the constituted governments in Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

In early 1948, Italy was the sole source of arms for the Jews. In January, 50 tons of arms were shipped from Italian ports. In February, 165 tons were shipped and in March, 300 tons.[92] In the summer, Czech arms flowed through the American sector in Germany to Belgium then to Israel.[93] As the communists took power in eastern Europe, arms became more available. The Russians backed partition and the communist regimes needed the negotiable currency the weapons would bring.[94] Agents were sent to the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union. In March 1948, the USSR pressured Yugoslavia to allow Czech arms to be transshipped through Yugoslavia labeled as Italian potatoes.[95]

The Arabs were also buying Czech arms in March of 1948. Major Fuad Mardam Bey of Syria had acquired 6000 rifles, 8 million rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition, explosives and handgrenades in

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[90] Ibid, p. 55.

[91] Ibid, p. 59.

[92] Mardor, p. 228.

[93] Ibid, p. 229.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid, p. 236.

Czechoslovakia. He hired the Italian vessel Lino to transfer the arms to Beirut. Enroute, the Lino developed engine trouble and put into the Italian port at Malfetta for repairs. In compliance with the United Nations embargo on arms shipments, the Italians seized the ship.[96] Haganah sunk the Lino in the harbor. The Italians then salvaged most of the arms and gave the Syrian permission to leave the country with the weapons. With the help of one Ada Sereni, Major Mardam Bey located a replacement ship--the Argiro. In August 1948, twenty miles off the Italian coast, the Argiro was stopped and boarded by Egyptians with orders to transfer the arms from the Argiro to their Egyptian fishing boat. The Egyptians were Haganah; two of the Argiro's crew were Italian sympathizers with Haganah and Ada Sereni was the chief Israeli agent in Italy.[97] The arms were transferred to Israeli corvettes and the Argiro was sunk on the high seas.[98]

Rekesh spread through Europe "acquiring" arms in the post-war confusion, storing them in French and Italian warehouses and shipping them to Israel disguised as machinery.[99] From one warehouse alone (near Milan), Rekesh shipped 1000 rifles, 200 Bren guns, 500 German rifles, 400 submachineguns, 500 revolvers and 1-1/2 million rounds of .303 and 9mm ammunition.[100] By

[96] Ibid, chapter 22.

[97] Kurzman, Dan, Genesis 1948: The First Arab-Israeli War, p. 549, The World Publishing Co., Cleveland, 1970.

[98] Mardor, chapter 22.

[99] Ibid, p. 226.

[100] Ibid.

independence day, Israel had purchased 24 airplanes, 59 vessels, 40 tanks, 144 half-tracks, 416 artillery pieces, 24 mortars, 158 heavy machine guns, 1417 medium machineguns, 6034 light machineguns, 52,391 rifles, 523 submachineguns and 1755 pistols.[101]

The Air Transport Service was organized to speed the shipment of arms from Europe to Israel. C-54s, C-46s, transport aircraft, and three B-17 heavy bombers of WWII staged out of Corsica, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia carrying supplies to Israel. In July 1948, the three B-17s, flying from Yugoslavia bombed Cairo, Gaza and Al Arish enroute to Israel.[102] While all this was going on outside the boundaries of Palestine, inside Palestine the Haganah had the Arabs to fight. Terror followed terror as a bomb exploded in a truck next to Arab National Committee Headquarters in Jerusalem on January 5, 1948. Nine Arabs were killed and 71 were wounded.[103] On the same day, the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem was blown up. Twenty persons were killed including the Spanish Consul, Don Manuel de Salazar Travesedo, Viscount de Tapia.[104] Haganah, in claiming responsibility for the attacks, said the Semiramis was headquarters for the Nejada movement and hadn't accepted guests in some time.[105] These attacks were said to be in retaliation for continual Arab lawlessness in the Old City, riots, lootings and arson.[106]

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[101] Ben-Gurion, p. 65.

[102] Mardor, p. 269.

[103] The Times, London, 5 June 1948.

[104] Ibid.

[105] The Times, 6 June 1948.

[106] Litvinoff, p. 271.

As the British pull out continued, Haganah and Jewish Agency undertook more and more of the responsibilities of a national government. The combat with the Arabs had shifted from small terrorist responses to larger-scale military operations. As independence neared, the Jewish leadership under Ben-Gurion began to consolidate its control over the Jewish forces and the government became concerned with demonstrating its validity as the new government of Israel.

CHAPTER III--IRGUN ZVAI LEUMI

The creation of the Revisionist Party has been mentioned earlier, as have some of the Irgun's actions against the British. Vladimir Jabotinsky, along with Joseph Trumpeldor, were responsible for convincing the British government to create a Jewish Legion in WWI. Of the four Jewish battalions created, two were organized by Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor and two were organized by Ben-Gurion and Yitshak Ben Zvi.[1] After the war, Jabotinsky was jailed by the British for organizing Jewish defense of the Old City during the Arab riots of 1920. He was released only after considerable pressure was brought against the Palestine Government by the Yishuv.[2]

Jabotinsky was elected to the Zionist Executive in 1921, but found the British White Paper of 1922 at odds with his dreams of a Jewish state. The 1922 White Paper split off a portion of Palestine and created the new state of Transjordan.[3] Jabotinsky believed that any deviation from the concept of a Jewish state within "historic Palestine," including Transjordan, was a betrayal of the Zionist cause.[4] The friction between Jabotinsky and the World Zionist Organization which accepted the White Paper caused Jabotinsky's resignation from the Executive in 1923. He formed

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[1]Levine and Shimoni, p. 207.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Laqueur, p. 45.

[4]Litvinoff, p. 205.

a new political group, the World Union of Zionist Revisionists and created a youth group, Betar (short for Brith Trumpeldor), named in memory of Joseph Trumpeldor who was "martyred" defending Tel-Hai settlement in the 1920 riots.

In 1935, because of the refusal of the Zionist Organization to adopt as one of its goals the creation of a Jewish state, Jabotinsky and his Revisionists seceded from the World Zionist Organization and formed the New Zionist Organization.[5] Throughout the disturbances of the 1930s, the Revisionists called for a more militant posture against the British than that taken by Haganah. The two aims of the Revisionists were to retaliate against Arab terrorism and to induce Great Britain to open Palestine for increased Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe and Hitler's Germany.[6] Jabotinsky was also at odds with Chaim Weizmann of the WZO over immigration. Weizmann felt immigration should be a deliberate process, measured and planned; Jabotinsky saw massive immigration as the key to turn Palestine into a Jewish state.[7] Jabotinsky wrote (based on his early life in Imperial Russia):

> "The worst of all horrors known is galuth, dispersion. The blackest of all characteristics of galuth is the tradition of the cheapness of Jewish blood: hadam hamutar, the permitted blood, the spilling of which is not prohibited

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[5]Levine and Shimoni, p. 201

[6]Kurzman, p. 55.

[7]Ibid.

and for which you do not pay. To this an end has been made in Palestine."[8]

In 1937, youths from Betar, led by David Raziel formed the Irgun Zvai Leumi (the National Military Organization or Etzel). Katz places the organization of the Irgun earlier than 1937, with the creation of "Haganah B," the "B" standing for Betar. One-half of the original Irgun was oriental Jewry. Yemenites and Sephardis were the prime source of recruits. Leadership of the Irgun was predominantly "young intellectuals in the Polish Revolutionary tradition."[9]

Sykes is somewhat more cynical in his evaluation of Jabotinsky than most authors. He says Jabotinsky

> "...declared himself against any cooperation with Arabs until the Jews were their effective masters in Palestine, and he was pressing for the formation of the Jewish Legion to conquer the promised land."[10]

Menachem Begin feels differently. The commander of the Irgun holds that the Hebrew defense organization put an end to the one-sided attacks by the Arabs, e.g., 1920 in Jerusalem, 1921 in Jaffa, the riots of 1929, and the "Arab Revolt" of 1936-1939.[11]

In 1938, with both Arab and Jewish terrorists active in Palestine, the British lost control. The British White Paper of 1939 halted most of the Arab attacks on the Mandatory Government.

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[8]Katz, p. 40.

[9]Asprey, p. 771.

[10]Sykes, Christopher, Crossroads to Israel, Collins, London, 1965.

[11]Begin, p.48.

Only WWII intervened to stop Jewish violence against the British.[12] On April 16, 1938, three Jews returning from a Passover service on the outskirts of Jerusalem were machinegunned to death. The next day in retaliation two Jewish terrorists exploded two bombs in an Arab cafe in Jaffa.[13] On April 21, two Jewish Revisionists fired on an Arab bus. They were captured and later sentenced to death by the British. In the appeal of their sentence, Mr. S. Laudman of the New Zionist Organization said they had fired at the bus out of frustration caused by two years of Arab violence.[14]

In Spring, 1938, Arabs killed five Jews in their sleep (no specific location noted in Katz's accounts), seven in an attack on a settlement and nine more died in an attack on a bus. There were sporadic shootings, stabbings, bombings and burnings. For each, the Irgun claimed retaliation in kind.[15]

The frustration of the Jews over alleged British non-protection was illustrated by the following Jewish comment made after a nightly Arab attack on the village of Rosh Pinna:

> "At each attack a British force would arrive on the scene. Sometimes they arrived in time to join in driving off the attackers. They were always in time to prevent any pursuit."[16]

When the 1939 White Paper was promulgated, the Irgun rapidly shifted its attack to the British authorities. The White Paper

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[12] Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 76.

[13] The Times, 18 April 1938.

[14] The Times, 5 June 1938.

[15] Katz, p. 36.

[16] Ibid. p. 35.

and all its restrictions against the Jews were graphic evidence that Arab terror and violence paid dividends. On May 17, 1939, the official day for the White Paper's announcement, the Irgun bombed the Palestine Broadcasting Studios.[17] The onslaught of the Second World War and the deaths of two of the Irgun's focal personalities intervened to halt Etzel's violence until 1944.

In August 1940, Vladimir Jabotinsky, the spiritual leader of the Irgun and the Revisionist Party, died in the United States. In October 1941, a greater tragedy hit the Irgun. David Raziel, who had been "detained" during the earlier violence by the British, was released from jail to conduct a commando operation in Iraq for the British Army. The British wanted Raziel to blow up oil fields in pro-Nazi Iraq to keep the oil away from the Germans. Raziel secretly intended to kidnap Haj Amin al Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who was behind the 1930-1939 Arab Revolts and had been living in Baghdad. Raziel was killed in Iraq and his death put an end to the projected raid and kidnaping.[18] Raziel's death sent the Irgun adrift through lack of a leader.

For a short time, Ya'acov Meridor led the Irgun, but it was an uneventful leadership. Meridor did have the good sense to see a natural leader in a recently immigrated Polish Jew named Menachem Begin and willingly yielded control to Begin in 1942. Begin was an organizer and philosopher and in time had

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[17] Frank, p. 76.

[18] Ibid, p. 104.

completely restructured the Irgun, severed its relationship with the Revisionist Party and declared the Irgun to be a political party.[19] The fruits of the reorganization became apparent when the British government rejected the Biltmore Program and "forced" the Irgun to renounce its wartime truce with the British.

Begin had organized the Irgun into four sections:

a. Army of the Revolution, or A.R. which consisted of reserve training units.
b. Shock Units, or S.U., never set up but intended as an underground organization for use within Arab held areas.
c. Assault Force, or A.F., who were the actual combatants, and
d. Revolutionary Propaganda Force, or R.P.F., who followed in the wake of the A.F. to explain the rationale for the A.F. attack.[20]

Begin notes that the R.P.F. was essential because the Zionist Revolt was as much a battle for people's minds as it was for land. Because of the British controlled press, pamphlets, posters and handbills were the primary means for dissemination of Irgun theory. The R.P.F. found that the truth, even if embarrassing, was the best tactic in the propaganda campaign.[21] After a particularly large assault on a British army depot that only yielded 14 rifles, the Irgun published the embarrassing story and found that it increased the public confidence in

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[19]Katz, p. 83.

[20]Begin, p. 76, p. 87.

[21]Ibid, p. 84.

the Irgun's actions and statements.[22]

Begin claims that the British believed the Irgun had thousands of professional terrorists. In reality, the full-time terrorists numbered fewer than 20 and probably never more than 40. In addition to the small number of full-time terrorists, there were several hundred to 3000 followers who could be called on for active assistance from time to time.[23] The High Command controlled all activities of the Irgun. When decisions weren't unanimous, the majority ruled. The Command consisted of Menachem Begin, Ya'acov Meridor, Arieh Ben-Elizer, Eliahu Lankin, Shlomo Levi and Samuel Katz.[24]

Begin developed a strategy for the Irgun, based upon three factors:

a. a study of the governing methods used by Great Britain in other colonial areas.

b. a study of the international situation.

c. an examination of the position and condition of Great Britain at the end of WWII.[25]

From these examinations, Begin developed the philosophy that British rule was dependent upon prestige, not force; therefore, destruction of British prestige would remove the British rule.[26]

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid, p. 62 and Center for Research in Social Systems,p.419.

[24]Begin, p. 62.

[25]Ibid, p. 52.

[26]Ibid.

> "The very existence of the underground, which oppression, hangings, torture and deportations fail to crush or to weaken must, in the end, undermine the prestige of the colonial regime that lives by the legend of omnipotence. Every attack which it fails to prevent is a blow at its standing."[27]

This philosophy, coupled with the Begin version of the "Masada complex" formed the foundation for Irgun terrorism. "We were convinced that our people truly had nothing to lose [in combating Great Britain] except the prospect of extermination."[28]

When the Biltmore Program was rejected by Britain, the Irgun and the Stern Gang joined forces. The only condition Begin placed on Irgun activities was that the British Army would not be attacked as long as the British were in the war against a National Socialist Germany.[29] In January, 1944, the Irgun and the Stern Gang carried out coordinated attacks against British civil institutions. The immigration department, income tax offices, and CID headquarters were all blown up.[30]

Early in 1944, the Irgun, in a handbill posted all over Palestine, called for a revolt against the British authorities.

> "There is no longer any armistice between the Jewish people and the British administration in Eretz Israel which hands over our brothers to Hitler. Our people is at war with this regime--war to the end."[31]

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[27] Asprey, p. 773.

[28] Begin, p. 41.

[29] Katz, p. 83 and Asprey, p. 773.

[30] Katz, p. 83.

[31] Begin, p. 42.

Fearful of British reprisals against the Yishuv for Irgun activity, Eliahu Golomb and Moshe Sneh of Haganah tried to persuade Begin to change the Irgun tactics, but to no avail. In the fall of 1944, the Haganah leader made threats to liquidate the Irgun: "We will step in and finish you."[32] Then on November 6, 1944, the Stern Gang assassinated British Minister of State in the Middle East, Lord Moyne. Haganah declared war on the Irgun and Stern Gangs. In late 1944, 279 Irgunists and Sternists were captured with the help of Haganah and deported by the British to Eritrea.[33] This campaign against the Irgun and Stern Gang was known as "the Season" after a British hunting term.[34] Begin forbade the Irgun from retaliating against the Haganah for "the Season."[35]

Relative calm then prevailed until the end of the war. Then came the Jewish Resistance Movement, which was characterized by joint efforts of Haganah, Irgun, and the Stern Gang. With the British attack on the Jewish Agency and incarceration of the majority of Haganah leadership, the Irgun took matters into its own hands.

During the period of the Resistance Movement, the Irgun had attacked Sarafand Military camp to steal arms. Two Jews were

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[32]Katz, p. 84 andBegin, p. 143.

[33]Asprey, p. 774.

[34]Begin, p. 144.

[35]Katz, p. 85.

captured, Michael Ashbel and Joseph Simchon. Under the "Emergency Regulations," they were tried by a military court and sentenced to death.[36] The Irgun held the trial to be illegal, claiming imaginatively that the defendants were prisoners of war and subject to the Geneva Convention.[37] On the night of June 18, 1946, the Irgun raided the British Officers' Club in Tel Aviv and kidnapped five British officers as hostages for Ashbel and Simchon.[38] Haganah and the Jewish Agency were outraged. They attacked the Irgun vehemently for harming the Zionist cause. The Irgun released two of the five hostages to show they had not been hurt. (Begin also indicates they were released because the location they occupied as captives was insecure.)[39] The Haganah claimed responsibility for their release. The High Commissioner granted Ashbel and Simchon a reprieve and commuted the sentence to life imprisonment on July 12, 1946. The other three British officers were then released by the Irgun.

The British raid on the Jewish Agency on 30 June 1946 has already been discussed. During the attack, the British found documents which implicated the Jewish Agency and Ben-Gurion in Haganah terrorist activities. The most damning evidence were the telegrams between London and Palestine discussing the "single serious incident." On July 1, The Times reported 2000 Jews

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[36] Ibid, p. 91.

[37] Ibid.

[38] The Times, 19 June 1946.

[39] Begin, p. 241.

detained for investigation, "the first phase of operations to restore law and order to Palestine is now virtually complete."[40] On the 3rd, it was reported that the British army was investigating "top secret" documents found in the raid on the Jewish Agency.[41] The British government had given the military its head. In addition to the Jewish Agency, widespread searches of Jewish settlements were conducted.[42]

Spurred by the British activity, Begin began to make a plan in conjunction with the Haganah. At the time of the incident, Haganah denied any part in the planning of the event, but history has shown that Haganah had as much at stake in the destruction of the King David Hotel as did the Irgun.

The left wing of the King David Hotel housed the Headquarters of the Palestine Administration. It was well fortified with barbed wire, soldiers, wire netting, steel doors and electronic entry devices. The rest of the building was still functioning as a hotel.[43] Begin's plan was to blow up the Government offices in the left wing. On July 1, the Haganah approved the Irgun plan. Kurzman says that Israel Galili of Haganah tried to talk Begin out of his plan, but Galili decided to sanction the attack in order to maintain some Haganah control over the operation.[44] From other sources, it appears Haganah was much more deeply

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[40] The Times, 1 July 1946.

[41] The Times, 3 July 1946.

[42] Kimche, p. 146.

[43] Ibid, p. 173.

[44] Kurzman, p. 465

involved. Asprey, Begin and Katz indicate that the King David was blown up for two reasons, to retaliate for the British attack on the Jewish Agency and to destroy the secret documents which would have linked the Jewish Agency and Ben-Gurion to Haganah terrorism.[45] Since most of the Jewish Agency and Haganah were in custody, only the Irgun seemed able to muster the forces necessary for the task. At the same time, the Stern Gang was to blow up government offices at the David Brothers building, an attack also approved by the Haganah. The Sternist attack failed due to timing problems.[46]

The attack on the King David was planned by Irgun operations chief "Giddy," Amihai Paglin, and Haganah operations officer, Yitshak Sadeh.[47] There were discussions on the warning to be given the occupants of the buildings. (It was as fundamental to Irgun operations as it was to those of the Haganah to avoid bloodshed whenever possible.)[48] Sadeh wanted only 15 minutes to make sure the British couldn't save the documents. Paglin wanted 45 minutes to clear the building. A compromise was reached at 30 minutes.[49] Twice the attack was postponed at Haganah request.[50]

On July 22, at about noon, a milk truck manned by "Arabs" pulled up to the kitchen entrance on the west end of the hotel.

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[45] Begin, p. 213, and Asprey, p.776.

[46] Begin, p. 213.

[47] Katz, p. 93, and Begin, p. 216.

[48] Katz, p. 93.

[49] Begin, p. 216.

[50] Ibid.

The "Arabs" carried their milk cans through a basement passageway to the east wing basement. A British communications soldier in the basement was shot by the Irgun as he emerged from a radio room, but the British did not have any guards posted in the basement.[51] At 1237 the bombs went off killing 91 British, Arabs and Jews and wounding 45 others.[52] Among the dead were Brigadier P. L. Smith-Dorrien, Commissioner of Commerce and Industry; Mr. G. T. Farley, Principal Assistant Secretary; Mr. J. Jacobs, Undersecretary of Finance and Mr. E. G. Brown, administrative assistant.[53]

The Irgun claims it gave ample warning to allow evacuation. Kimche says there is no substantiation that the Irgun warned the Chief Secretary in sufficient time and that all other warnings were too close to the detonation for evacuation.[54] Begin claims (substantiated by other authors and reporters) that warning "cracker bombs" were detonated outside the hotel to keep bystanders away, and telephone warnings were made to the King David Hotel management, The Palestine Post, and the French Consul General.[55] Press representatives apparently had enough

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[51]Kimche, p. 174.

[52]Asprey, p. 776.

[53]The Times, 23 July 1946.

[54]Kimche, pp. 174-175.

[55]Begin, p. 219.

warning to arrive and photograph the warning bombs before the King David was blown up.[56] The French Consulate across the street from the hotel had time to open their windows to prevent them from breaking in the blast.[57]

The Irgun said that all calls were completed by 1215.[58] The Palestine Post claims it received a call at 1235.[59] The Post also published "official" timing of the incident from the Palestine Government: 1210--the Irgun entered the hotel, 1220--they escaped from the hotel, 1225--the diversionary blast went off outside the hotel, 1237--the east wing of the King David Hotel was blown up.[60]

In order to answer the question, "Why wasn't the hotel evacuated?", Haganah quoted the Chief Secretary of the British Administration as saying, "I give orders here, I don't take orders from Jews." He then insisted that no one leave the building.[61] Katz and Litvinoff have a more plausible explanation with their assessment that the British simply did not take the Irgun's warning seriously.[62]

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[56]Katz, p. 94.

[57]Begin, p. 219.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Palestine Post, 23 July 1946, Jerusalem, Israel, p. 1,col.1.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Katz, p. 94 and Begin, op cit, p. 220.

[62]Katz, p. 94.

"The Irgun had intended the explosions to be a propaganda spectacular, not a mass murder, but their customary warning to officialdom had been ignored as a Jewish bluff."[63]

The Yishuv and Jewish Agency indignation was immediate. Even the Haganah denounced the act. This outcry was ameliorated, however, by a letter quoted by Kimche from Lt. Gen. Sir Evelyn Barker to all troops and police.

"1. The Jewish Community of Palestine cannot be absolved from responsibility for the long series of outrages culminating with the blowing up of a large part of the Government offices in the King David Hotel causing grievous loss of life. Without the support, actual and passive, of the general Jewish public, the terrorist gangs who actually carry out these criminal acts would soon be unearthed and in this measure the Jews in this country are accomplices and bear a share in the guilt.

2. I am determined they shall suffer punishment and be made aware of the contempt and loathing with which we regard their conduct. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by the hypocritical sympathy shown by their leaders and representative bodies nor by their protests that they are in no way responsible for these acts as they are unable to control the terrorists. I repeat that if the Jewish public really wanted to stop these crimes they could do so by actively cooperating with us.

3. Consequently I have decided that with effect of receipt of this letter you will put out of bounds to all ranks all Jewish places of entertainment, cafes, restaurants, shops, and private dwellings. No British soldier is to have any intercourse with any Jew and any intercourse in the way of duty should be as brief as possible and kept strictly to the business in hand.

4. I appreciate that these measures will inflict some hardship on the troops but I am certain that if my reasons are fully explained to them they will understand their propriety and they will be punishing the Jews in a way the race dislikes more than any, by striking at their pockets and showing our contempt for them.

Signed E. H. Barker
Lieut-Gen
G.O.C. Palestine "[64]

Restricted

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[63] Litvinoff, p. 248.

[64] Kimche, p. 41.

The anti-Jewish tone of the letter did nothing to help the British anti-terrorist campaign, in fact it added to the Irgun rationale for the attack. The British cause was especially damaged because the Irgun intercepted the letter and posted copies all over Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv.[65]

A reward of £2000 was placed on Begin's head.[66] Three hundred and seventy-six Jews were detained on suspicion of the King David Hotel demolition.

On the 24th of July, Clement Atlee said "the authorities in Palestine will be provided with any sanctions they need to prevent attacks by terrorists," and that "evidence that the terrorists were East European are all the more reason not to allow 100,000 immigrants into Palestine."[67]

In early August, an interesting set of arguments appeared in the Times. MP Mr. Morrison was discussing the Palestine situation:

> "The greatest obstacle to success in these operations has been the refusal of the Jewish population in Palestine to co-operate with the forces of law and order."[68]

Mr. Morrison disassociated the government from Gen. Barker's letter in terminology, but not in meaning. He assailed the Jewish Agency for failure to cooperate with the mandatory

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[65] Ibid, p. 175.

[66] The Times, 25 July 1946.

[67] The Times, 24 July 1946.

[68] The Times, 2 August 1946.

government when such cooperation "is the duty expressly laid upon them by the Mandate."[69] The Jewish Agency responded that Britain couldn't ask the Yishuv to support the mandate when the British government didn't support it.[70]

Violence continued in 1946. Pipelines were cut, supply trains blown up, rail lines were cut, military bases were attacked, banks were robbed, police and soldiers were ambushed and killed, and roads were mined. On October 31, two bombs exploded in the British Embassy in Rome with slight damage and minor injuries.[71] The Irgun claimed responsibility.[72]

In December, 1946, a series of incidents occurred which convinced the Yishuv that violence paid bigger dividends than negotiation. Two Irgunists, Katz and Kimchi, were given 15 years in jail for carrying arms, plus 18 lashes each. Begin asked, after 70 generations of the lash, "was an oppressor now to whip us in our own country?"[73] A warning was published to the British:

> "For hundreds of years you have been whipping natives in your colonies--without retaliation. In your foolish price you regard the Jews in Eretz Israel as natives, too. You are mistaken. Zion is not Exile. Jews are not Zulus. You will not whip Jews in their homeland. And if British authorities whip them--British officers will be whipped publicly in return."[74]

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] The Times, 1 November 1946.

[72] The Times, 5 November 1946.

[73] Begin, p. 231.

[74] Ibid, p. 233.

On the 27th of December, Kimchi received his 18 lashes. The next day a British major, Paddy Brett, and three NCOs, Staff Sergeants Terence Gillam, E. Wright, and Gordon Ventham, were whipped in retaliation.[75] One week later, floggings were abolished as a part of British punishment. For 25 years, the Jewish Agency had protested the floggings to no avail. They only stopped when the Irgun retaliated in kind.[76] The message was clear. Violence paid.[77] As 1946 drew to a close, it was noted that the Irgun and Stern Gang had killed 373 persons in the course of their campaigns against the Arabs and the British.[78]

As 1947 began it didn't seem to be any better as the Times reported an Irgun warning, "The British military base now being established in Palestine will be attacked by our soldiers, military vehicles on the road are also liable to attack."[79] The paper conceded that all Irgun threats have been carried out. The same article reported that Irgunist Dov Gruner was sentenced to death for his part in an attack on the Ramat Gan police armory in April, 1946. In his sentencing hearing, Gruner attacked the British for their failure to uphold the mandate. "Nothing has

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[75]Ibid, p. 234 and The Times, 30 December 1946.

[76]Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 421.

[77]Kimche, p. 193.

[78]Asprey, p. 777.

[79]The Times, 1 January 1947

therefore remained of the legal basis of your rule, which now rests on one principle only: brute force."[80] Yishuv response was disbelief at Gruner's sentence. The Irgun response was more visible. The Times reported Jews were using homemade flamethrowers in their terrorist attacks.[81] On the 12th, the Irgun blew up the Haifa police station. Anti-British propaganda, bomb warnings and fake cardboard bombs were planted in British installations throughout Italy.[82] On January 26, Judge Windham was kidnapped from his home in Jerusalem as a hostage for Dov Gruner. When a stay of execution was granted on the 28th, the judge was released.[83]

On 14 February 1947, Foreign Secretary Bevin told Arab leaders that the Palestine mandate would be submitted to the United Nations for "advice on its administration."[84] The statement came after a refusal by both Arabs and Jews to accept Bevin's plan of a British administered Palestine divided into Arab and Jewish cantons.[85]

The British had threatened to apply martial law to prevent the terrorist attacks. On March 1, the Irgun responded to the threats by attacking four British military camps, military

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[80]Begin, p. 254.

[81]The Times, 8 January 1947.

[82]The Times, 13 January 1947.

[83]The Times, 29 January 1947.

[84]Begin, p. 317.

[85]Levine and Shimoni, p. 78.

vehicles throughout Palestine, and in a spectacular piece of violence, blew up the British Officers' Club at Goldschmidt House in Jerusalem. Casualties were heavy at the Officers' Club; 80 persons were injured in the attack.[86] The British Sunday Express, under a headline "Govern or Get Out," published the following statement: "British must get out of Palestine and stay out. Britain, unlike Nazi Germany, cannot repay terror with counter-terror..."[87] On 2 March 1947, Britain declared martial law in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan and Petah Tiqva. Called "Operation Hippo" by the British, martial law affected 250,000 Jews. They were confined to their houses except between 10 A.M. and 1 P.M.; shops were closed except during those three hours; postal and telephone service was suspended; military courts replaced civil courts; wheeled traffic was forbidden and gatherings of more than six people were prohibited.[88] Two days later, Secretary for the Colonies, Arthur Creech-Jones asked for a U.N. special committee to be set up to expedite U.N. consideration of the mandate.[89] On the same day in Palestine, G.O.C. MacMillan banned the word terrorist because it was too attractive. He felt it elevated the Irgun and Stern Gang to a special status when they were actually "murderers, felons and thugs."[90]

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[86] Katz, p. 125.

[87] Begin, p. 217.

[88] The Times, 3 March 1947.

[89] The Times, 4 March 1947.

[90] Ibid.

But martial law didn't stop the attacks: vehicles were mined, buildings demolished, and the Schneller Building in Jerusalem, in the heart of the martial law area, was attacked by the Irgun.[91] Under repeated pressure from the Irgun and Stern Gang, martial law was lifted on March 16, 1947.[92] The London Times was stimulated to state that martial law as applied in Palestine proved to be "useless as a weapon against terrorism and only strangles the economic life of the country."[93] Britain asked the U.N. to move the special session on Palestine from September, 1947 to April 28, 1947.

On the last day of March, explosions at the Shell refinery caused £250,000 damage. The British told the Yishuv the cost of the damages would be borne by the community to induce Yishiv cooperation against the terrorists.[94]

Under a 24-hour curfew on April 16, 1947, Dov Gruner, Dov Rosenbaum, Mordechai Alkoski and Elizier Kashani were taken to Acre prison and executed. (The latter three were Sternists.) The secrecy was such that none of the Jews were accorded the last rites by a rabbi.[95] The Irgun had warned that the "execution of prisoners of war is premeditated murder. We warn the

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[91] Katz, p. 126.

[92] Begin, p. 322.

[93] The Times, 17 March 1947.

[94] The Times, 1 April 1947.

[95] Begin, p. 268.

British regime of blood against the commission of this crime."[96] Two chief rabbis appealed to the Irgun not to retaliate for Gruner's execution.[97] But retaliation wasn't possible--the British military were not available to retaliate upon, they were all confined to their bases.[98]

On 23 April 1947, the Irgun warned the British that Gruner's execution "freed the Irgun from observing the 'rules of war' and in the future ... [they] ... would try and execute on the spot ... any prisoners falling into their hands."[99] On May 4, Irgunists under Dov Cohen attacked the "impregnable" Acre fortress. With the help of some explosives smuggled to the inmates, the prison was breached and 41 Irgunists and Sternists escaped along with 244 Arab criminals. Haaretz on May 5 commented: "The attack on the Acre Jail was received here as a serious blow to British prestige after the hangings on the eve of the U.N. session were to have demonstrated Britain's resolute control of the situation."[100]

During the attack, five Irgunists were captured. Three, Avshalom Haviv, Meir Nakar and Yaacov Weiss, were tried and sentenced to death.[101] On July 12, Sergeant Mervyn Paice and

[96]Ibid, p. 255.

[97]The Times, 21 April 1947.

[98]Begin, p. 275.

[99]The Times, 24 April 1947.

[100]Begin, p. 327.

[101]Katz, p. 141.

Sergeant Clifford Martin were kidnapped from a cafe in Nathanya at 1 A.M. by the Irgun. Despite martial law, a 24-hour curfew, a cordon around Nathanya and the assistance of the Haganah, the British couldn't find the two NCOs.[102] Begin announced the Irgun's intention to hang the two NCOs if the three Irgunists were hung.[103] On the 29th, the Jews were executed. The next day, Amihai Paglin--"Gideon" (who planned the King David Hotel and the attack on the Acre Fortress)--hung the two British soldiers.[104] He then moved the bodies to an orange grove, re-hung them, then mined the area. (The Irgun warned the Haganah of the mines because the Haganah was helping the British search for the bodies. The Haganah then warned the British and the mines caused no casualties.)[105]

On the 31st, Begin announced the execution. Attached to the NCOs were notices from the Irgun. The NCOs had been tried after investigation of "criminal anti-Hebrew activities:

> "1. illegal entry into the Jewish homeland;
> 2. membership of the British criminal terrorist organization known as the Army of Occupation, which was responsible for torture, murder, deportation, and for denying the Hebrew people the right to live;
> 3. illegal possession of arms;
> 4. anti-Jewish spying in civilian clothes, [they were members of Field Security];
> 5. premeditated hostile designs against the underground movement." [106]

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[102] Ibid, p. 164 and The Times, 28 July 1947.

[103] The Times, 29 July 1947.

[104] Kurzman, p. 172.

[105] Ibid.

[106] The Times, 1 August 1947.

The note continued to say the hangings were a judicial act, not a reprisal. (However, none of the sources consulted in this paper including Katz and Begin imply these killings were anything but a reprisal.) Katz concludes that the reprisals were effective because no more executions took place in Palestine and that the British announced the surrender of the Mandate eight weeks later.[107] In a lecture to the Royal Empire Society, former Chief Secretary of the British Government in Palestine, Colonel Archer-Cust, said, "The hangings of the two British sergeants did more than anything to get us out [of Palestine]."[108]

August 1974 evidenced a continuation of the attacks on the British in Palestine. On the 4th, a branch of Barclay's Bank was robbed of £1000 by "8 Yemenite Jews."[109] The British arrested Tel Aviv mayor Israel Rokach and the Nathanya mayor Oved Ben Ami for suspicion of terrorist sympathy.[110] Shortly after, three British constables were killed when Jews blew up the Palestine Government Labor Department in Jerusalem.[111]

On 10 August, Arabs shot up the Hawaii Cafe in Tel Aviv. There was Arab-Jewish rioting in Jaffa on the 13th and 14th. (In the riots, 22 Arabs and 12 Jews were killed and eighty persons were injured.)[112] On the 15th, in retaliation for the

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[107] Katz, p. 164.

[108] Begin, p. 290.

[109] The Times, 5 August 1947.

[110] The Times, 6 August 1947.

[111] Ibid.

[112] The Times, 16 August 1947.

Hawaii Cafe raid, Haganah took the offensive (then melted away again), and blew up an Arab house killing 12 Arabs, four of whom were children. The Arabs were suspected of being involved in the Hawaii Cafe attack and the Haganah claimed the house was a training center for Arab guerillas. Haganah said that it didn't know about the children prior to the attack.[113] In the same month, violence spread outside of Palestine. In Austria, a U.S. Army newspaper, Wiener Kurier, published an Irgun letter claiming responsibility for attacks on a British troop train in Austria, and British High Command Headquarters in the Sacher Hotel in Vienna.[114]

On the 26th of August in Palestine, £150,000 was taken from Barclay's Bank Tel Aviv (£105,000 was recovered the same day) and four British policemen were killed.[115] On the 29th, 10 persons were killed, mostly British police, when the Irgun rolled a barrel bomb into the Kingsway section of Haifa. Irgun claimed that the attack was retaliation for the British decision to send the 4554 refugees for the Exodus 1947 to exile in Cyprus and Hamburg, Germany.[116]

On the last day of September 1947, the ~~U.S.~~ U.N. Special Committee on Palestine, which had interviewed scores of interested

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[113] The Times, 14, 15, 16 August 1947.

[114] The Times, 20 August 1947.

[115] The Times, 27 August 1947.

[116] The Times, 30 September 1947.

people in the U.S., Europe, Palestine and the Arab world, made its report. Representatives from Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Holland, Persia, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia recommended terminating the Mandate.[117] The majority plan called for a partition into Arab and Jewish states; the minority plan called for a federal state with Arab and Jewish governments ruling their respective sectors.[118] On behalf of the American section of the Jewish Agency, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver accepted the partition plan two days later.[119]

On October 18, the Irgun called for a Jewish government to be set up to take control when the British left.[120] Menachem Begin had a nine-point plan:

> "1. The establishment of Jewish Provisional Government, which would fight for the liquidation of the British Occupation Regime:
> 2. The establishment of a Supreme National Council as the Parliament of the people, to legislate, impose duties and issue orders.
> 3. The publication of the Declaration of Hebrew Independence and Freedom as the basis for a constitution which should guarantee liberty, equality and social justice for all inhabitants.
> 4. The establishment of courts of justice and the boycotting of the British courts.
> 5. The setting-up of a national Exchequer to which all taxes would be paid, and the prohibition of all payments to the Mandatory Government.

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[117] Laqueur, p. 108.

[118] Ibid, p. 111.

[119] The Times, 3 October 1947.

[120] Katz, p. 180.

6. The creation of a unified Liberation Army which would take an oath not to lay down its arms until our independent State was set up.

7. The establishment of a Supreme Military Command which should proclaim general mobilization and organize an emergency administration for the daily life of the people, and conduct the struggle.

8. A call for help to the Diaspora.

9. The publication of a call to the peoples of the world--to the United States, the Soviet Union, France and to all the free peoples--to give aid to the Hebrew fighters for freedom."[121]

Begin was concerned with an Arab-Jewish War over control over Palestine. He continues to accuse Ben-Gurion and the Jewish Agency of ignoring his warnings in the euphoria of success which followed achievement of the long-awaited Jewish State.[122]

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted in favor of terminating the British Mandate and partitioning Palestine. British withdrawal was to be not later than August 1, 1948.[123] The entire month of December was marked by complex, three-way engagements. Jewish convoys were attacked by Arabs; Arab villages were attacked by Jews. In between were the British attempting to maintain some balance. On December 2, Arab youths rioted in Jerusalem. They looted and burned Jewish shops and assaulted the shopkeepers. In the first evidence of British "neutrality" in the final days of the mandate, British police

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[121]Begin, p. 205.

[122]Ibid, p. 336.

[123]Laqueur, p. 116.

evacuated Jewish residents in the riot area, but did nothing to stop the rioters and actively prevented Haganah from stopping them.[124] The Times reported the riots as an apparent breakdown of British control as Arabs fought Arabs, Jews and British alike. To the Times it also seemed the Jewish Agency was beginning to take over the reigns of power.[125]

On 15 December 1947, in the wake of Jewish counter-attacks against the Arabs, the Irgun circulated more handbills. The Irgun accused the British of "planning a bloody struggle between Jews and Arabs, out of which it means to gain renewed control of the country."[126] The Irgun contended that British evacuation of Palestine was to be done in such a way as to maintain British Army control in Jewish areas while evacuating Arab areas, thereby freeing the Arabs to attack the Jews. The Irgun said the British were the real enemy and only if British forces concerned themselves solely with evacuation from Palestine would they be safe from Irgun attack.[127]

On the 18th, the Jewish Agency complained that British troops and police weren't protecting Jews from the Arabs. On the same day two British NCOs were shot in Jerusalem by the Jews.[128] One died from his wounds. Four days later in Jerusalem the Irgun shot and wounded a British officer and warrant officer

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[124] Kimche, p. 201.

[125] The Times, 3 December 1947.

[126] The Times, 16 December 1947.

[127] Ibid.

[128] The Times, 18 December 1947.

from the Life Guards regiment in retaliation for the alleged rape of a Jewish girl by members of the same regiment a week earlier.[129]

The Arab nations had never kept secret their opposition to a Jewish state in Palestine. The only dissenting voice in the Arab call for war against the Jews was Egyptian Premier Nokrashny Pasha. Collusion between Arab and English was a foregone conclusion to the Zionists; they cited British Brigadier Clayton's presence at all the Arab League meetings.[130]

On December 29, a bomb thrown from a taxi killed two British policemen and eleven Arabs near the Damascus Gate to Jerusalem. This bomb was in retaliation for handgrenades tossed at Jewish workers enroute to their jobs.[131] On the same day, Irgun "sea commandos" attacked an Arab coffee house in Jaffa in retaliation for similar attacks on Jewish coffee houses in Tel Aviv.[132]

The Arab Liberation Army, raised to prevent Jewish takeover of Arab lands (Arab viewpoint), or to destroy the Jewish State (Zionist viewpoint), began infiltrating Palestine in early 1948, before the British had officially yielded the Mandate.[133] The British moved their evacuation date up to 15 May, 1948. On January 10, a directive from the Minister for War, Emmanuel Shinwell, ordered G.O.C. Palestine, General MacMillan, not to

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[129] The Times, 22 December 1947.

[130] Kimche, p. 197.

[131] The Times, 30 December 1947.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Kimche, p. 201.

engage either Arabs or Jews unless their actions disturbed the British withdrawal.[134] The British were out, but the fight for Palestine was just beginning. The London Times expressed the situation in the following terms:

> "The Jewish State already virtually exists, partition has already largely come about through the wedge of fear and hostility between Arabs and Jews, and the Arabs seem committed to force. Only an independent and powerful force, at the command of the commission [UNSCOP], ruthlessly applied, could alter the intentions of the Arabs to make trouble and of the Jews to reply with more trouble."[135]

In February, 1948, the Palestine Post building was bombed. British police were implicated in the attack. The heart of the commercial district in Jerusalem, Ben-Yehuda Street, was blasted. British deserters working with the Arabs were implicated. Fifty-three persons were killed and over one hundred were wounded in the Ben-Yehuda explosions. Barnett Litvinoff, the historian, claims that ten British soldiers were killed by the Irgun and Stern Gang in retaliation. Haganah, relatively quiescent for almost two years, was ordered into the open against the Arabs with orders to shoot if resisted. The three underground groups began preparing for the Israeli war of independence. Faced with problems of evacuation, the British ceased their former close supervision of Zionist affairs.[136]

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[134] Kurzman, p. 180

[135] The Times, 17 January 1948.

[136] Litvinoff, p. 292.

The history of the 1948 War is beyond the scope of this paper as Jewish terrorism changed to military operations, and the terrorists organization became the Israeli Defense Force. A chapter on the Irgun would not be complete, however, unless one additional incident is covered. In the history of Arab-Israeli relations the village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem and the Zionist attack on it manages to enflame more emotions that most other events, including Entebbe and Munich.

In April, 1948, forces of Haganah, Irgun and the Stern Gang were trying to raise the seige of Jerusalem. In the first week of April, 1500 Jews attacked 1400 Arabs under Abdul Kadir el Husseini at Castel.[137] From 2 - 9 April, possession of Castel changed hands several times, but eventually was finally taken by the Haganah on the 9th. Depending upon the author's bias, the attack on Deir Yassin was either a coordinated attack timed to coincide with the Haganah offensive at Castel,[138] or a move by the Irgun and Stern Gang to get their share of glory.[139]

The coordinated attack thesis seems to have more supportive documentation. A synthesis of many authors would contain the following details. Etzel and Lehi planned to attack Deir Yassin because it was located on the outskirts of Jerusalem and could have been used to launch an Arab attack on the besieged

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[137] Ibid, p. 275.

[138] Katz, p. 214.

[139] Kimche, p. 219.

city. In 1929, Arabs had attacked Jews in the New City using Deir Yassin as a base camp.[140] Katz says the attack on the village was motivated by the constant sniping at the western suburbs of Jerusalem from Deir Yassin.[141] The attack was planned for 0430 on 9 November. Eighty Irgunists and forty Sternists were to attack from three sides: Irgun from the east and south; Stern Gang from the north; the road to the west was to be left clear for the Arabs to escape.[142] A sound truck was to accompany the attack to warn the Arabs and to inform them of the escape corridor to the west.[143] The Irgun forces were led by Mordechai Raanan, the Sternists by Yehoshua Zetler.[144] The entire operation was to be completed within two hours.[145] Then the trouble started.

The sound truck broke down, apparently the victim of an anti-tank trap.[146] Deir Yassin turned out to be armed to the teeth. By 10 A.M., forty of the attackers had been wounded, four attackers were killed.[147] The Irgun was running out of ammunition forcing Raanan to change his strategy. He ordered the dynamiting of every building from which the Arabs were firing.[148]

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[140] Kurzman, p. 141.

[141] Katz, p. 214.

[142] Kurzman, p. 139.

[143] Katz, p. 215.

[144] Kurzman, p. 138.

[145] Katz, p. 215.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid.

Arab men, women and children were killed in the explosions. Forty per cent of the attackers were casualties. Two hundred fifty out of 400 villagers were killed (Arab figures said 110 out of 1000 villagers were killed.)[149]

The Irgun claims the attack was approved by David Shaltiel, Haganah commander in Jerusalem,[150] because the Haganah had plans for an airfield at Deir Yassin.[151] Begin offers this letter from Shaltiel to Raanan in support of this statement:

> "I learn that you plan an attack on Dir Yassin. I wish to point out that the capture of Dir Yassin and holding it is one stage in our general plan. I have no objection to your carrying out the operation provided you are able to hold the village. If you are unable to do so I warn against blowing up the village which will result in its inhabitants abandoning it and its ruins and deserted houses being occupied by foreign forces. This situation will increase our difficulties in the general struggle. A second conquest of the place will involve us in heavy sacrifices. Furthermore, if foreign forces enter the place this will upset the plan for establishing an airfield."[152]

The other side of the discussion, however, holds that Deir Yassin attempted to maintain good relations with the Jews. Jewish farms supplied the villagers with fresh fruit and Deir Yassin villagers worked as servants in Jewish homes. Forty Arab terrorists were refused sanctuary by the village mukhtar.[153]

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[149] Kurzman, p. 148.

[150] Begin, p. 163.

[151] Katz, p. 214.

[152] Ibid, p. 162.

[153] Kurzman, p. 138 and Kimche, op cit, p. 217.

Shaltiel claims the Irgun never warned Deir Yassin of the attack and that both Etzel and Lehi ran away from Deir Yassin.[154] A New York Times article claimed that Haganah only intervened and took control of Deir Yassin after Arab women and children, captured in the attack, were paraded by Etzel and Lehi through Jerusalem.[155] Haganah turned the captives over to the British.[156]

On the day following the attack, Shaltiel said:

> "The splinter groups did not launch a military operation. . . They could have attacked enemy gangs in the Jerusalem area and lightened the burden which Jerusalem bears. But they chose one of the quiet villages in the area that has not been connected with any of the gang attacks since the start of the present campaign; one of the few villages that has not let the foreign gangs in.
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> "For a full day, Etzel and Lehi soldiers stood and slaughtered men, women and children, not in the course of the operation, but in a premeditated act which had as its intention slaughter and murder only."[157]

Ben-Gurion immediately wrote to King Abdullah of Transjordan disclaiming all Jewish Agency responsibility for the terror at Deir Yassin. Abdullah replied that the Jewish Agency was responsible for Jewish actions.[158] Nathan Friedman-Yellin, chief of the Stern Gang (in opposition to Zetler, who led the

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[154] Katz, p. 216.

[155] New York Times, p. 18, 11 April 1948.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Kurzman, p. 148.

[158] Ibid, p. 149.

Stern Gang aginst Deir Yassin), called the massacre "inhuman and not consistent with the dignity of freedom fighters."[159] It was the propagandists, however, who gained the most from Deir Yassin. The Arab rhetoric attempted to intensify Arab fear and hatred of the Jews, but instead created panic,[160] reduced Arab will to resist and spurred Arab flight from the country.[161] Jordanian columnist Yunes Achmed Assad wrote in Al Urdun on April 9, 1953,

> "The Jews never intended to harm the population of the village, but were forced to do so after they encountered fire from the population which killed the Irgun commander. The Arab exodus from other villages was not caused by the actual battle but by the exaggerated description spread by the Arab leaders to incite them to fight the Jews."[162]

Katz claims the Arab exodus began in January at the request of the Arab Higher Committee in order to lessen the problems of Arab soldiers. Katz also claims by March the entire Plains of Sharon were devoid of Arabs.[163] Other Zionists state that 150,000 Arabs had fled Jewish Palestine by the end of April,

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[159] Ibid.

[160] Kurzman, p. 149.

[161] Katz, p. 216.

[162] Ibid, p. 217.

[163] Ibid, p. 216

1948.[164] The claims and statements are all open to serious discussion as concerns their accuracy.

The Jews, too, used Deir Yassin's memory effectively, both against the Irgun and Stern Gang and against the Arabs. Jacques de Reznier of the International Red Cross said, "News of Deir Yassin promoted a widespread terror which the Jews always skillfully maintained."[165] The Jews used Deir Yassin extensively in their psychological warfare campaigns designed to make the Arabs quit their lands.[166] Horror recordings and sound trucks accompanied Jewish attacks.

> "Shrieks, wails and anguished moans of Arab women, the wails of sirens and the clangs of fire-alarm bells, interrupted by a sepulchral voice calling out in Arabic, 'Remember Deir Yassin' and 'Save your souls, all ye faithful! Flee for your lives! The Jews are using poison gas and atomic weapons! Run for your lives in the name of Allah!"[167]

All of this language led to a second "terrorist myth."[168] Not only had the terrorists claimed credit for the British withdrawal, but now they claimed credit for the panicked flight of Arabs from Jewish areas. The Zionist terrorists claimed that

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[164] Sykes, p. 253.

[165] Abu-Lughod, Ibrahim, The Transformation of Palestine, p. 186, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1971.

[166] Ibid, p. 185.

[167] Heiman, Leo, Marine Corps Gazette, Vol. 48, p. 38, June 1964.

[168] Kimche, p. 217.

their actions lessened Jewish casualties and increased the Jewish percentage of the population.[169] The accuracy of these statements depends upon the authors' points of view. Those persons biased in favor of the Irgun believe that the terrorist claims are true, those who are biased toward Britain or Ben-Gurion believe them to be fabrications.

When the Jewish Agency declared the existence of the state of Israel, the Stern Gang and that part of the Irgun in Israeli held territory merged with Haganah to form the Israeli Defense Force. In Jerusalem, which was not under Israeli control, the three groups battled the Arabs under separate Haganah, Irgun and Stern banners. The existence of three private armies was the cause of great concern for Ben-Gurion and the fledgling government of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion took action to alleviate the problem of multiple private armies and quickly achieved success.

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[169] Ibid.

CHAPTER IV--THE STERN GANG

When the studios of the Palestine Broadcasting Company were blown up by the Irgun to protest the White Paper of 1939, the commander of the Irgun, David Raziel, was jailed by the British. Raziel's second-in-command, Avraham Stern, was in Poland trying to obtain arms training for the Irgun's commandos. Stern rushed home to Palestine to take command of the Irgun.

Stern's first concern was to put a stop to the recently discovered CID "torture" of Jewish prisoners. Ralph Cairns, Superintendent of Police and head of the Jewish section of CID was associated by Stern with detention procedures alleged by Irgun to represent "torture." Stern pronounced an Irgun death sentence on Cairns. On August 7, 1939, Stern was captured by the police as a part of the same campaign that netted Raziel. On August 22, however, Cairns was killed when his vehicle detonated a land mine which was later claimed to have been planted by the Irgun.[1]

When WWII broke out, the Irgun High Command, imprisoned *in toto* in Sarafand detention camp, declared a truce with Great Britain for the duration of the war.[2] The truce caused

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[1] Frank, p. 20.

[2] Ibid.

a split between Raziel and Stern. Stern was obsessed with the idea of Jewish independence in Palestine and saw no difference between Great Britain and Germany since both were opposed to a Jewish State. He felt there was little difference in degrees of mortal sin, i.e., opposition to a Jewish State was a mortal sin whether executed by the British, German, or another government.[3]

In January 1940, Raziel was released from prison. Five months later Stern was freed. Stern charged Raziel with cooperation with the British and of making a secret deal with them. Raziel denounced Stern, then resigned as commander of the Irgun. Avraham Stern once again stepped into the vacancy. An appeal was made by the Irgun to its spiritual and philosophical leader, Vladimir Jabotinsky, to settle the dispute between the leaders. Frightened by Stern's Anglophobia, Jabotinsky told Stern to resign in favor of Raziel. Stern refused. In September, 1940, Jabotinsky died. Stern then walked out on the Irgun and formed his own group, vowing to fight British Imperialism everywhere.[4] Stern named his new group Lokhammei Herut Israel or Lehi (Freedom Fighters for Israel or FFI). It was more commonly known as the Stern Group or Stern Gang.[5]

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[3]Sykes, p. 243.

[4]Frank, p. 91.

[5]Asprey, p. 772.

Avraham Stern has been called an unlikely terrorist. He was born in Suwlaki, Poland. Thirty-three years old in 1940, and a poet, he spoke Russian and Polish perfectly, knew Italian, spoke superior Hebrew and read Homer in the original Greek. He envisioned a Hebrew Empire from the Nile to the Euphraytes and swore destruction to anyone who opposed the Hebrew Liberation Movement.[6]

Stern felt that a Jewish State could only be achieved by armed struggle.

> "The future of the Jews would be decided by the struggle in Palestine. The obstacle to independence was not Germany, but Britain, and any truce with Britain meant a cessation in the fight for independence. Therefore, Britain remained the enemy."[7]

In his fanaticism for a Jewish state, Stern believed helping Britain could not aid the creation of a Jewish state, while helping Hitler might.[8] Stern planned to train 40,000 European Jews and launch an invasion of Palestine from Italian ports. The Italian government was apparently ready to go along with Stern's plan, but Poland's reaction to Stern's proposal to arm and train Jews is unknown except that an officer's training school was set up in southwest Poland at a farmhouse in the Zakafna Mountains.[9]

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[6]Frank, p. 101.

[7]Katz, p. 52

[8]Ibid, p. 56.

[9]Frank, p. 78.

Early in the Second World War, the German Government, uncertain of its ultimate policy toward the Jews, was camouflaging its use of concentration camps and espousing exile for Jews to Madagascar.[10] Stern sent his second-in-command, Nathan Friedman-Yellin to the Balkans to negotiate with the Germans for the release of "tens-of-thousands" of European Jews.[11] Stern's plan, interesting as it was, collapsed almost immediately. Friedman-Yellin was intercepted by the British and jailed in Syria.[12]

Jabotinsky felt the Jewish revolt against the British should concentrate on civil institutions only, e.g., post offices, police stations and administrative offices, that the British Army not be attacked, and that the Irgun must warn the British prior to each attack. Stern said that such tactics were "dangerous romanticism."[13] As a result, all the relatively small scale attacks against the British Army which occurred during the war were carried out by the Stern Gang.

The Stern Gang was not associated with any international group such as the World Zionist Organization or the New Zionist Organization, and was forced to finance its activities through bank and jewelry store robberies. A favorite target was the

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[10] Ibid, p. 106.

[11] The Times, 24 January 1942.

[12] Katz, p. 56.

[13] Frank, p. 103.

Anglo-Palestine Bank. As a result of Lehi's meagre finances, Stern was forced to live on a $10-a-month stipend from his Gang.[14]

In early 1942, Lehi claimed that several of its members were being "tortured" by Captain Geoffry Morton of CID. Stern decided to execute Morton. His plan was to lure Captain Morton to an apartment where a booby trap would be detonated. On January 20, Morton sent three other policemen, Deputy Superintendent Solomon Shieff, Inspector Goldman (both Jews) and Inspector George Turton to the apartment in his place. Shieff was killed instantly, Goldman died shortly thereafter and Turton died on the 22nd.[15] The Yishuv was incensed at the killing of the Jewish police officers. On February 7, the British offered a £1000 reward ($5000) for Stern's arrest.[16] Five days later, under what Stern's supporters call mysterious circumstances, the British captured and killed Avraham Stern.

The alleged "mysterious circumstances" are roughly the following: After the apartment bombing, Stern hid at the flat of Moshe Svorai, a follower who had been arrested two weeks earlier. The apartment was on the 4th floor of #8 Mizrachi B Street in Jerusalem. As the British approached the door, Mrs. Svorai hid Stern in a wardrobe. Captain Morton and the CID searched the apartment and found Stern. As she was being led from the

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[14] Ibid, p. 106.

[15] The Times, 21 January 1942 and 24 January 1942.

[16] Palestine Post, 7 February 1942, p. 1, col. 1.

apartment, Mrs. Svorai saw a manacled Stern, surrounded by CID agents. After she was downstairs on the sidewalk, Mrs. Svorai claimed she heard three shots from the apartment house and then saw Stern's body, wrapped in a blanket, kicked down four flights of stairs. The British authorities said that Avraham Stern was "shot while attempting to escape."[17] The police report elaborated that Stern had bolted for an open window and was shot before he could reach it.[18] The police then rounded up all but 25 of Stern's followers including the number-two man, Nathan Friedman-Yellin. With over 200 supporters in jail, Stern's movement should have died with him, but it didn't.[19]

Of the 25 Sternists remaining free were Dr. Israel Schieb and Joshua Cohen. On September 1, Sternists Itzhak Yizernitsky and David Shaoul escaped from Moyra Detention Camp and joined them. Yizernitsky and Cohen hid in an orange grove for several weeks evading the British. Yizernitsky grew a beard and became Rabbi Shamir, a "bent, wheezing, Talmudic scholar."[20] Cohen, born in Palestine, is described as a "one-man-army." He had a $3000 reward on his head at age 16 years.[21] Schieb immigrated to Palestine in 1941, adopted the name Dr. Eldad, and then changed it to"Sambation" after the Biblical River.[22] Rabbi

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[17] Frank, p. 109.

[18] Palestine Post, 13 February 1942, p. 1, col. 1

[19] Frank, p. 109.

[20] Ibid, p. 121.

[21] Ibid

[22] Ibid

Shamir then recruited a former Raziel supporter named Avigad and began to rebuild Lehi.[23]

Under the new organization, leadership was to reside in a three-man central committee, comprising Dr. Eldad, Rabbi Shamir and Nathan Friedman-Yellin (in Latrun Detention Camp).[24] The new Lehi was not designed as a military organization. There was no rank structure. The commander was simply "he-who-is-responsible." Lehi was turned into a secret revolutionary society.[25]

The initials for the organization, LEHI, were given a second meaning, a practice which has become a favorite of Middle East terrorist organizations. In Hebrew, Lehi means jaw, and the analogy between Samson and the Philistines, and the Stern Gang and Great Britain could not be overlooked. Current readers of Middle East affairs will see the similarity of this play on words in the Palestine Liberation Organization's Fatah. The official name for the organization is Haraket Tahrir Falestine, or H.T.F. . Reversing the initials to F.T.H. and adding vowels, Fatah is derived. Thus, the Palestine Liberation Movement becomes Fatah or "Conquest." It is also interesting to note the similarity of the Fatah and Irgun

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[23]Ibid, p. 129.

[24]Ibid, p. 133.

[25]Ibid, p. 129.

emblems: fists, clenched around rifles superimposed on a map of Palestine.

Shamir chose terrorism as Lehi's only practical mode of operation. Sternist numbers were too small and the members were too short of weapons to mount a major operation so Shamir concentrated on individual acts of terrorism to combat the British.[26]

> "A man who goes forth to take the life of another whom he does not know must believe one thing only--that by his act he will change the course of history."[27]

> "Such acts will render the government weak and ineffectual. Such acts will have powerful echoes everywhere. Such acts will prove to the authorities that they cannot enforce law and order in Palestine unless they keep vast forces here at a cost of thousands of pounds."[28]

Avigad took on the task of building and training the secret society. He studied activities of the Irish Republican Army, Norodnaia Volia(Russian terrorists who killed Czar Alexander II in 1881), the Serbian Black Hand; he saw every gangster and western film in Palestine; read all about Al Capone and prohibition gangs; and studied tactics between bootleggers and "G-men."[29] Friedman-Yellin issued a new order: each member was to be armed at all times; such small numbers could not risk the change of arrest: kill or be killed.[30] On November 1, 1943, Nathan Friedman-Yellin and 20 other Sternists tunneled

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid, p. 35.

[28] Ibid, p. 129.

[29] Ibid, p. 133.

[30] Ibid, p. 135.

out of Latrun,[31] and Lehi's activities began to expand.

Lehi had ideological problems, however, and two factions emerged. One, led by Yehoshua Zetler, was extremely militant, while Friedman-Yellin's smaller faction wanted to create a political party out of the Stern Gang.[32] Israel Schieb stayed out of the dispute and simply quoted the Bible to justify terror and violence in the creation of a Jewish State.[33]

With the British renunciation of the Biltmore Program, the Sternists increased their attacks in 1944. Between January and August of that year, fifteen persons were killed by the Stern Gang.[34] On February 16, Inspector Green and Constable Eiver were searching Haifa Jews carrying "seditious pamphlets." When they attempted to open a "suspicious parcel," the two apparent owners of the parcel drew weapons and shot the policemen to death.[35] The London Times editorialized that:

> "Propaganda by terrorism is becoming increasingly common with a sector of the Jewish community which is campaigning against the White Paper and for the immediate establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth."[36]

On 25 February 1944, the Stern Gang blew up two police cars,[37] but in March, the "kill or be killed" order took its toll. On

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[31] Ibid, p. 150.

[32] Kurzman, p. 54.

[33] Ibid, p. 55

[34] Asprey, p. 773.

[35] The Times, 17 February 1944.

[36] Ibid.

[37] The Times, 26 February 1944.

the 20th, a Sternist was trapped by police. He fired at them and was shot and killed in return.[38]

On March 24, an explosion wrecked CID headquarters in Haifa. Three British constables were killed; three were wounded. On the same day 65 miles away one wing of the three-story CID headquarters in Jaffa was destroyed by a bomb. In Jerusalem, two British police were killed and two wounded in numerous bombing and shooting incidents. The British under the impact of the terrorist attacks imposed a 5 P.M. to 5 A.M. curfew in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem.[39] The curfew was cancelled, however, on 7 April 1944, after 60 suspects had been arrested.[40]

The British announced rewards totalling £1900 on April 7. Of the six members of the Stern Gang mentioned in the reward announcements, Jacob Levstein and Friedman-Yellin each had £500 on their heads.[41] The rewards failed to deter the Stern Gang and sporadic attacks on policemen and CID inspectors continued through the summer.

On August 8, 1944, Lehi escalated and tried to assassinate High Commissioner Sir Harold MacMichael. The attack failed, but three of MacMichael's staff were wounded.[42] Underlying

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[38]The Times, 21 March 1944.

[39]The Times, 25 March 1944.

[40]The Times, 3 April 1944.

[41]The Times, 8 April 1944.

[42]Sykes, p. 249.

the attempt on the High Commissioner was a plot that would shake Great Britain to the back benches of Parliament. To examine the succession of incidents, it is necessary to recall the Patria incident. [Chapter II] The official Jewish Agency position at the time of the refugee deaths was that they were a mass suicide as protest to British intransigence toward Jewish immigration.[43]

In February 1942, a similar incident occurred in Turkey. The Struma, an aged, leaking hulk containing 747 East European Jews, had been docked in a Turkish port for two months. Sir Harold MacMichael thought the 747 might contain Nazi agents and refused to allow the refugees to come into Palestine. On February 14, 1942, the Struma was towed into the Black Sea, where she broke up and sank. There was only one survivor. The Jewish Agency repeated the "mass suicide" rationale.[44]

Handbills went up all over Palestine. "Sir Harold MacMichael, known as the High Commissioner of Palestine, WANTED FOR MURDER by drowning of 800 refugees aboard the S.S. Struma."[45] The Stern Gang tried five times to carry out a death sentence on Sir Harold. The fifth and final attempt was the attempt on August 8.[46]

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[43] Ibid, p. 256.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Frank, pp. 110-111.

[46] Ibid, chapter 14.

Then the central committee of Lehi changed the target. The new victim, living in Cairo, was the Right Honorable Walter Edward Guiness, Baron Moyne, the current Minister of State in the Middle East and Colonial Secretary at the time of the Patria and Struma disasters. Lord Moyne was MacMichael's superior, a staunch supporter of the 1939 White Paper, defender of the Arab cause[47] and an avid anti-Zionist, a label he received in 1941 when he refused to let Weizmann raise a Jewish army to fight Hitler.[48]

Another story, totally unsubstantiated, but prevalent nonetheless, reinforced the anti-Zionist label. The story said a Hungarian Jew named Noel Brand was arrested in Syria for being a Nazi agent. He brought with him a story that Adolph Eichmann had authorized a trade of 1,000,000 Jewish prisoners for "10,000 lorries, and a quantity of tea, coffee, soap and other goods." Moyne's response was reported to be, "My dear fellow, whatever would I do with a million Jews?"[49]

Sambation gives three reasons for Moyne's death:

> "One: He pays with his own life for his stand. He carries out policy, but that policy flows in part from the guidance he gives London. He is responsible as a symbol but also as a personality.
> Two: The man who succeeds him will think twice before doing the same thing.
> Three: We have a stage upon which to explain our motives to the world."[50]

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[47] Ibid, p. 191.

[48] Sykes, p. 254.

[49] Frank, p. 17.

[50] Ibid, p. 21.

Rabbi Shamir justified the act because Lehi's struggle was

> "...not a misunderstanding between natives and a local administration--but a major conflict between a fighting nation which demands national freedom...and an imperialistic power which denies it."[51]

The Stern Gang, under Yizernitsky, Friedman-Yellin and Sheib, plotted Moyne's death early in August 1944.[52] The assassins were chosen carefully. They were Eliahu Hakim and Eliahu Bet Zouri. Both Eliahus were grounded in a hatred of the British rule by the 1921 and 1929 riots and nothing that had happened since had changed their hatred.

Eliahu Hakim was chosen because he was the best shot in the Gang. Hakim had been influenced by the events of the Patria. For him, Moyne's death was revenge.[53] The other assassin, Bet Zouri, was the best spokesman in the Stern Gang.[54]

> "Thus, the one assigned to fire at Moyne would not be likely to miss; and if they were caught, the other would prepare an eloquent defense before the world."[55]

Already in Cairo, as members of the Royal Army, were twelve Lehi members who prepared lodging, cover and information about Moyne.[56] On September 14, Eliahu Hakim arrived in Cairo from Palestine. A month later, on October 19, Bet Zouri arrived in Cairo. The two assassins "cased" the situation, studying

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[51] Ibid, p. 190.

[52] Ibid, p. 19.

[53] Sykes, p. 256.

[54] Frank, p. 35.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid, p. 193.

Moyne's arrival, departures and routine movements. They also planned their escape route. The dates chosen for the attack were October 30 or 31 or November 6.[57] Lord Moyne was at a conference outside of Egypt on the last days of October, so November 6 became the fateful day.

On the 6th, at 1230, Lord Moyne left work for home to take the traditional 1 P.M. - 5 P.M. siesta. Accompanying him were Captain Arthur Hughes-Onslow, Moyne's aide-de-camp; Mrs. Dorothy Osmonde, Moyne's secretary; and Lance Corporal A. T. Fuller, Moyne's driver. As the car drove up to the gates of Moyne's house, it stopped; Capt. Hughes-Onslow went to open the house door and Corporal Fuller moved to open the car door. The assassins jumped out of the bushes. Hakim ran to the open car door and fired three shots into Lord Moyne who died at 8:40 p.m. that evening. Corporal Fuller tried to stop the attack and Bet Zouri shot him three times killing him at the scene. Mounting rented bicycles, the assassins peddled off toward the Nile River and the native quarter of Cairo on the other side where they hoped to lose themselves in the crowds.[58]

Constable Mohammed Amin Abdullah, an Egyptian motorcycle officer who was passing by gave chase. Bet Zouri fired at the

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[57] Ibid, p. 194.

[58] Ibid, p. 22.

constable and missed. Abdullah returned the fire, hitting Zouri. Hakim returned to aid the fallen Bet Zouri. A crowd of bystanders then jumped Bet Zouri and Hakim and held them for the constable.[59]

According to their plan, Bet Zouri and Hakim kept silent for three days to enable Lehi to protect the other Sternists in Egypt.[60] They then revealed themselves to be members of the Stern Gang. Confusion was rampant after the confession. It took a long time for the assassins' true names to be publicized. The Times called them Moshe Cohen Itzhak and Chaim Saltzmann until January.[61] Bet Zouri announced the reasons for Moyne's assassination in his confession:

1. Moyne was the head of the Middle East division of the British government.

2. Moyne was a symbol of British rule in Palestine.

3. Moyne was responsible for oppressive policies, intolerable to Jewish nationalists.[62]

Tel Aviv's Haaretz echoed Yishuv sentiment

> "They have done more by this single reprehensible crime to demolish the edifice erected by three generations of Jewish pioneers than is imaginable."[63]

Parliament appealed to the Yishuv to cooperate in capturing terrorists of Lehi and Etzel.[64] The assassination initiated

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid, p. 31.

[61] The Times, 9 November 1944.

[62] Frank, p. 31.

[63] The Times, 9 November 1944.

[64] Ibid.

"the Season." Ben-Gurion and Haganah declared war on Irgun and the Stern Gang. Lehi told Golomb, of Haganah, that the Stern Gang would suspend operations, thus the Irgun bore the brunt of Haganah's attack.[65]

The assassins' trial opened in January, 1945, with correspondents present from the Palestine Post, the New York Times, the London Times, Associated Press, UPI, NBC, CBS, Agence France Presse, Reuters, Davar and Haaretz.[66] Both of the assassins admitted the crime, and both held that since the Moyne assassination was of international scope, a mere Egyptian court was insufficient to try them for the attack.[67]

Despite eloquent pleas by their defense attorney and a measure of public support for the two assassins, Eliahu Bet Zouri and Eliahu Hakim were found guilty on January 18 and sentenced to death.[68] There was a good possibility that King Farouq would have commuted the sentence to life imprisonment until February 24. On that day, Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmad Mayer was assassinated. Because of the international outcry over the two assassinations, the new Prime Minister, Nokrashny Pasha, had no option but to execute the Jews. The convicted assassins of Lord Moyne were hung on March 22, 1945.[69]

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[65] Begin, p. 151.

[66] Frank, p. 238.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid, p. 290.

Resentment against the Haganah had grown as a result of the ruthlessness of "the Season" and intensified. The distaste for Haganah cooperation with the British was deepened by British deportation of 279 Irgunist and Sternists.[70] A serious upheaval was prevented, however, when the Jewish Resistance Movement was formed in November, 1945.[71] [See Chapter II]

The Resistance Movement was effectively dissolved on June 29, 1946, with the British occupation of the Jewish Agency Headquarters. From that date on, the Stern Gang, like the Irgun, operated without guidance or control from the Jewish Agency. Concentrating mainly on police and banks, the Stern Gang continued to spread its particular brand of terror against the British until the partition of Palestine was announced. The emphasis then shifted to attacks on the Arab population of Palestine.[72] With the declaration of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, the Stern Gang merged with the Haganah and Palmach in the Israeli Defense Forces.[73]

Two incidents deserve special mention in discussing Sternist terrorism and its unintentionally random nature. The first began in summer 1947. British Major Roy Farran was seen placing Sternist Abraham Rabinowitz in a vehicle. Rabinowitz was never seen again. After an investigation of the

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[70] Sykes, p. 257.

[71] Kimche, p. 88.

[72] Kurzman, p. 54.

[73] Ben-Gurion, p. 103.

incident, on August 7, 1947, the British courts dismissed the case against Major Farran because it was never shown Rabinowitz was ever in Farran's charge.[74] The Lehi vowed vengence against the police but put retaliation off because the Irgun felt such attacks would frighten the British away from the Jewish sections of town. At the time, the Irgun was trying to capture British hostages for the three Irgunists sentenced after the attack on the Acre Jail.[75]

Almost one year later, in Histons Hall, Codsall, England, a package bomb exploded, killing Mr. Rex Farran, Major Farran's brother. The address on the package was Roy Farran. The Stern Gang had reached out to England to carry out Major Farran's death sentence, but had killed the wrong man.[76]

The anti-Arab nature of Lehi actions shifted once during the 1948 war to recreate the same terror and tensions as Lord Moyne's assassination. In August, 1948, a United Nations truce was in effect and a special U.N. team was in Palestine. Headed by Count Folke Bernadotte, President of the Swedish Red Cross and U.N. Mediator for Palestine, the team had proposed a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The plan provided a merger of Arab Palestine with Transjordan; the annexation of the Negev to Transjordan; western Galilee would be given to

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[74]The Times, 8 August 1947.

[75]Katz, p. 163.

[76]The Times, 4 May 1948.

the Jews (in exchange for the Negev); all Arabs who fled Palestine during the war would be repatriated; Jerusalem would be annexed to Transjordan; Haifa would become an international port; and Lod an international airport.[77] The Stern Gang was the most vocal opponent of this plan.[78]

On August 10, Lehi picketed the Belgian Embassy protesting Bernadotte's presence in Jerusalem. They were dispersed by the new commander of the New City--Moshe Dayan. One of the signs carried by the Sternists read "Remember Lord Moyne."[79]

The three commanders of Lehi, Friedman-Yellin, Shieb and Yizernitsky, decided that Bernadotte's assassination would give Ben-Gurion's government "the guts it lacked in asserting Israeli rights."[80] The dissidents felt Bernadotte could not influence the Arabs, but that he could influence the new Israeli government. In the summer of 1948, the Irgun felt that they could achieve secure Israeli borders at the Litani River, Jordan River, Suez Canal and the Red Sea. The Stern Gang and the Irgun were afraid Ben-Gurion might "sell out" to the United Nations.

Lehi created Hazit Homoledeth, the Fatherland Front, for the sole purpose of killing Bernadotte.[81] This front organization was supposed to take the pressure off of the Stern Gang

[77] Levine and Shimoni, p. 74 and Kurzman, p. 556.

[78] Kurzman, p. 556.

[79] Ibid, p. 547.

[80] Ibid, p. 556.

[81] Katz, p. 276.

after the attack.[82] Three Sternists, Yehoshua Zetler, Joshua Cohen and Stanley Goldfoot planned the operation. Cohen had prior experience--he had trained both Bet Zouri and Hakim.[83] Handbills were posted warning Bernadotte to get out of Palestine. The Count, with his heavy duties and responsibilities, remained in Palestine.[84]

On September 16, 1948, while traveling by car from Government House to Katamon quarter in Jerusalem to meet with the mayor, Dov Joseph, the U.N. mediator was ambushed by machine-gun wielding terrorists. Count Bernadotte and the chief U.N. observer in Jerusalem, French Colonel Serat, were killed. The killers reportedly used an Israeli army type jeep.[85] U.S. Consul General John J. MacDonald reported to the State Department that the assassins were probably from the Stern Gang.[86] Reuters quoted a Sternist who claimed no knowledge of the attack, "I am satisfied that it happened."[87]

Hazit Homolodeth claimed responsibility:

> "We executed Bernadotte, who served as an overt agent of the British enemy. His duty was to give effect to British plans to surrender our country to foreign rule and abandon the Jewish population. Such be the end of all enemies of Jewish freedom in its homeland."[88]

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[82] Kurzman, p. 557.

[83] Ibid.

[84] New York Times, 18 September 1948.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] New York Times, 19 September 1948.

The Israeli government felt Bernadotte's death was an "attack on the authority of the U.N. and a calculated assault on the sovereignty of the state of Israel."[89] The killers were "traitors to its people and enemies of its liberty."[90] The IDF and Israeli police rounded up 200 terrorists and published anti-terrorist measures: 5 to 25 years imprisonment for a terrorist act; 1 to 5 years imprisonment for membership in a terrorist organization; and up to 3 years imprisonment or a £1000 fine or both for support of a terrorist organization.[91] The Sternist newspaper Mivrak denounced the "base government" of Israel and called for the release of the 200 terrorists.[92] Friedman-Yellin and Scheib were "fleeing to an unknown destination."[93] Friedman-Yellin was jailed but later released along with the other 200 after the international furor died down.[94] While actually in jail, Friedman-Yellin was elected to the Knesset.

After the Bernadotte incident, the Stern Gang rejoined the IDF and continued to function as an integral part of the Israeli army. The most fitting description of the Stern Gang comes perhaps from Litvinoff: They "were a lawlessness unto themselves."[95]

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] New York Times, 21 September 1948.

[92] New York Times, 20 September 1948.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Kurzman, p. 567.

[95] Litvinoff, p. 245.

CHAPTER V--CIVIL WAR--ZIONIST VERSUS ZIONIST

The three terrorist organizations, Haganah, Irgun and the Stern Gang, with their respective philosophies and tactics, represented a conflict within the Yishuv over the future leadership of the Jewish state. Because of the League of Nations' recognition of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency as the responsible organizations for the implementation of the Jewish national home, the members of the Agency felt that they were the sole representatives of the Jewish people.[1] Although the Jewish Agency did not exist until 1929, the World Zionist Organization had an official role in Palestine as early as 1918. While attempting to form a Jewish Agency as called for in the League of Nations Mandate and incorporate Zionist and non-Zionist philosophies into that agency, the World Zionist Organization administered Jewish goals in Palestine until the Agency's creation in 1929. In 1920, the elected Assembly and National Council were created.[2] In 1920, the General Federation of Labor, or Histadrut, also was formed. The largest employer and strongest voice in Palestine, the Histadrut was actually a non-political organization.[3] But political parties, such as Ben-Gurion's Mapai Party, controlled the Histadrut.

[1]Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 63.

[2]Ibid, p. 411.

[3]Levine and Shimoni, p. 157.

As a result, the Histadrut, led by Mapai, held key portfolios in the Jewish Agency and thereby took the role of Zionist leadership.[4,5]

The Mapai and its partners in political thought, Paole Zion and Hapoil Hatzair, formed the socialist wing of the Vaad Leumi.[6] The appearance, therefore, of Jabotinsky's Zionist Revisionists on the political right was viewed by Ben-Gurion and his associates as a challenge for leadership of the Jewish Nation.[7]

When viewed from Ben-Gurion's perspective, it would seem almost inevitable that the Jew-versus-British and Jew-versus-Arab controversies would extend to Jew-versus-Jew. From the literature available, it appears that such conflict did occur, but it was a one-sided effort. David Ben-Gurion and his allies emphasize a greater challenge to Jewish Agency authority than that which actually existed. It is probable that the challenge was real, but less strong than indicated by Ben-Gurion and stronger than maintained by his opponents, Katz and Begin. Had it not been for the Second World War, challenge for Zionist leadership by the Revisionists might have occurred in the 1939-1942 time frame. The forced cooperation between the British, the Jewish

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[4]Litvinoff, p. 206.

[5]Ibid, p. 208.

[6]Ibid, p. 206.

[7]Ibid.

Agency, Haganah and the Irgun to combat Nazi Germany stalled the internal Jewish conflict until 1944-1948. Revisionists claim that the Biltmore Program of 1942 was "belated acceptance of Jabotinsky's thinking by Weizmann and Ben-Gurion."[8] However in adopting the Revisionist's demand for a Jewish state, Ben-Gurion managed to take all the credit for the idea away from the Revisionists and even shunted Chaim Weizmann onto the sidelines.[9]

The "Jewish Revolt" which began when the Irgun renounced its truce with England and attacked the British anew in 1944 was "not only without their [Jewish Agency] consent, but in defiance of their prohibition.[10] The strongest opposition to the Irgun and Stern Gang attacks was from the official Jewish organizations.[11] Jewish Agency propaganda created the image of the Irgun and Lehi as "criminals and fascists ... stabbing Zionism in the back and attempting to overthrow Jewish authority."[12]

The "dissidents," as the Irgun and Lehi were called, were fed up with attempts at negotiation with the British. Begin wrote:

> "If the Jewish Agency obeyed the British and the Irgun obeyed the Agency, the rule of the High Commissioner might continue forever."[13]

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[8]Katz, p. 58.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Begin, p. 133.

[11]Katz, p. 83.

[12]Ibid, p. 84.

[13]Begin, p. 149.

The Jewish Agency, however, was told by Prime Minister Churchill that possibilities for a Jewish state were good. "I carved up Palestine once, I shall unite it again and carve it up a second time."[14]

In autumn 1944, the Haganah commander, Golomb, told Menachem Begin that secret discussions were underway with the British and that continued Irgun attacks on the British would hinder the discussions. He then threatened that Haganah would "step in and finish you," if the Irgun attacks weren't halted.[15] Moshe Sneh also tried to persuade the Irgun to stop its attacks on the British, but the Irgun said that it didn't want Jewish fate to rest in British hands.[16]

In addition to the internal challenge for Zionist leadership, the Agency had another problem. The British were holding the Jewish Agency responsible for the acts of terror by the Irgun and the Stern Gang.[17] If the Jewish Agency couldn't control Jews in their homeland, the authority of Ben-Gurion's government as a spokesman for world Jewry would be in question.

Lord Moyne's assassination gave Ben-Gurion the excuse he needed to reduce the effectiveness of the Stern Gang and the Irgun. "The Season" was initiated. In a speech to the

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[14]Sykes, p. 256.

[15]Ibid, p. 250.

[16]Begin, p. 143.

[17]Ibid, p. 121.

Histadrut Conference, Ben-Gurion outlined a four-point program to liquidate the dissidents.[18] They were to be expelled from school or fired from their jobs. They were not to be given refuge by the Yishuv. The population was not to submit to threats by the Irgun. The Yishuv was to cooperate with the British forces in rounding up Irgunists and Sternists.[19] The plan was not well received in the Yishuv. Cooperation with the British was anathema.

The position of the Jewish Agency can be appreciated. To Ben-Gurion the creation of a Jewish state appeared imminent. Jewish unrest would only convince the British of the continued instability of the area and confirm the continuing need for British presence in Palestine to maintain the peace. If the dissidents could not be controlled by the Jewish leadership, then serious questions would be asked about the legitimacy of that leadership and its ability to govern a new nation.

The other side of the question, the dissidents' view, claims that Ben-Gurion and the rest of the "official" Zionist leadership ignored the Arab problem until the last minute in order to consolidate their political position. They claim that time and energy expended to combat the Irgun and the Stern Gang could have been directed toward Britain or toward the Arabs.

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[18] Katz, p. 84.

[19] Begin, p. 144.

The literature also gives the impression that it was the dissidents' feeling that the Jewish Agency deliberately ignored the Arab problem so as not to offend the British, encourage British departure, and make it appear that Zionism was not endangering the Palestinian Arabs.

Menachem Begin states a forceful case in The Revolt. There was indeed a high probability of a Jewish civil war in Begin's opinion. But, Begin claims, the Irgun dissented in order to fight for Israel, not to rule it and that the Irgun's struggle was innocent of any secondary motive.[20] Begin says two factors prevented a civil war: first, the Irgun was never taught to hate its enemies; second, the Irgun fought for Jewish rule, and was not concerned with power--a point he says the Jewish Agency could not understand.[21] Thus, according to Begin, the "civil war" later claimed by Ben-Gurion did not exist--Ben-Gurion had [according to Begin] no rival for control of the state.

Begin states the Irgun was determined not to create a civil war--so determined that Begin's orders forbade retaliatory attacks on Haganah.[22] This was evidently a wise move on his part, because several Haganah attempts to dismember the

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[20] Ibid, p. 134.

[21] Ibid, p. 133.

[22] Ibid, p.135.

Irgun physically were aborted by public pressure from the Yishuv.[23] In retrospect, Chaim Weizmann remarked that the dissident violence had had a positive effect on the Yishuv and garnered popular support. Katz depicts Yishuv reaction to Irgun and Stern violence thusly:

> "Violence paid political dividends to the Arabs while Jewish 'havalaga' was expected to be its own reward. It didn't even win official [British] recognition."[24]

Begin supports this contention by this statement regarding the various roles of the Jewish Agency, Haganah, the Irgun and Stern Gang in eliminating British rule in Palestine:

> "Let us remember that this was a revolt by dissidents and throughout almost the whole period official leaders in the Jewish Agency did not want the revolt. Throughout the whole period they certainly did not want the dissidents."[25]

The "almost" referred to is that period from November 1945 to September 1946 when the Jewish Resistance Movement unified Haganah, Stern Gang and Irgun in their opposition to the new Labour Government's policies concerning Palestine.[26]

During this period of joint operations, Ben-Gurion supported the terrorism. "It is difficult to ask the Yishuv to obey the law when Great Britain is violating the mandate."[27]

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[23] Katz, p. 180.

[24] Ibid, p. 24.

[25] Begin, p. 135.

[26] Ibid, p. 181.

[27] The Times, 31 December 1945.

The seizure of the Jewish Agency by the British and the demolition of the King David Hotel ended the cooperation between Haganah and the dissidents.

Although Israel Galili told Begin that Haganah would prevent Yishuv and Jewish press criticism of the Irgun attack on the King David Hotel, Haganah didn't follow through.[28] Even though Haganah had an interest in the attack, politically it felt it could make greater gains in Yishuv support by condemning the Irgun act. Ben-Gurion, in France-Soir, said "The Irgun is the enemy of the Jewish people--it has always opposed me."[29] A rather odd condemnation from the man who possibly benefited most from the attack.

Menachem Begin claims that the June 29 attacks on the Jewish Agency allowed the "defeatists" led by Moshe Sneh to gain control of the official Jewish institutions (Haganah and Palmach) at the expense of Israel Galili's "activist" faction.[30] Begin says this event ended all Haganah resistance against the British and redirected Haganah efforts toward immigration.[31] Begin goes further to state that Galili, under pressure from the Irgun to support anti-British civil disobedience, was unable to do so because of Jewish Agency interference.[32]

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[28] Begin, p. 225.

[29] Ibid, p. 223.

[30] Ibid, pp. 207, 209.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid, p. 198.

In early 1947, the Palmach engaged in anti-terrorist beatings and kidnappings.[33] With Haganah assistance seventy-eight Irgunists and Sternists were caught and imprisoned by the British.[34] The Palestine Government attempted to persuade the Palestine newspapers to publish pictures and descriptions of the terrorists to aid in their identification and capture. Under threats from the Irgun and the Stern Gang, the papers elected not to do so.[35]

In a speech to the Vaad Leumi on April 1, 1947, Ben-Gurion said:

> "The terrorists have guns, so have we. We have more men than they, and when that time comes our force will have to act because they only understand the language of force."[36]

The London Times analyzed the Haganah attacks on the terrorists as pro-Zionist but not pro-British, "These attacks by moderates should not be taken as an indication of growing Jewish support for the Government, as actually anti-British feeling among the Jews is stronger now than ever."[37] The Times perceived the Haganah would rather punish the dissidents themselves than turn them over to the British.[38]

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[33]The Times, 19 February 1947.

[34]The Times, 14 March 1947.

[35]The Times, 20 March 1947.

[36]The Times, 2 April 1947.

[37]The Times, 5 May 1947.

[38]Ibid.

After the announcement of the British withdrawal from Palestine, the Irgun

> "resolved to give immediate and unequivocal support to a provisional government established by the Jewish Agency on or before May 15. If, however, the Jewish Agency fails to set up a government by May 15, the Irgun would establish a provisional government by itself or in concern with others."[39]

In the face of competition for control of the Israeli Government, official Jewish Agency attacks on the dissidents were stepped up. Katz says:

> "Begin and his comrades were not to be allowed to reap the political rewards of the Irgun war on British rule. Ben-Gurion was to be acclaimed as the man who forced the British to leave."[40]

As the day of independence approached, Ben-Gurion was determined to eliminate the "independent" armies, and create one Jewish force. He felt he could control Haganah. The leftest Palmach had to be handled with kid gloves. Ben-Gurion said the right wing dissidents couldn't be handled at all.[41] But, even Haganah wasn't homogeneous and totally under Jewish Agency control. Ben-Gurion felt it needed corrections to create the core of the IDF. He and Galili reorganized Haganah to allow closer control by the Jewish Agency and tightened Haganah discipline.[42]

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[39] Katz, p. 175.

[40] Ibid, p. 176.

[41] Litvinoff, p. 278.

[42] Ben-Gurion, p. 86.

Several agreements were then made with the Irgun to assimilate them into the Israeli Defence Force. On March 8, 1948, the Irgun and the Stern Gang agreed to be incorporated into the IDF. At the last moment, however, the Irgun pulled out because its fighters would have been dispersed within the IDF. The Irgun wanted to join and fight as a unit.[43] A second agreement was made on June 3, but an incident occurred which according to Begin almost kindled a civil war. According to Ben-Gurion it was a civil war.

The Hebrew Committee (the Irguns' counterpart to the Jewish Agency) had purchased a surplus U.S. landing ship/tank (LST). It had been renamed the Altalena. It was purchased before the U.N. partition and British evacuation of Palestine[44] and had been loading Irgun recruits and arms in France for Shipment to Palestine. On June 11, 1948, while a U.N. cease-fire was in force, the Altalena sailed with 1000 Irgunists, 27 trucks, 5000 Lee-Enfield rifles, 250 Bren guns and 5 million rounds of ammunition. Attempts by the Provisional Israeli Government to prevent its sailing under the U.N. cease-fire were too late to prevent the Altalena's departure. Kurzman alleges that the French supplied the arms to the Irgun because they were bitter over Britain's handling of French interests

[43] Katz, p. 204.

[44] Kurzman, p. 457.

in Syria and Lebanon and because the Irgunists had convinced Foreign Minister Georges Bidault that a strong Irgunist political power in Israel would support France in her North Africa disputes.[45]

Begin, Avraham, Meridor and Katz were all present on May 15, a month before the Altalena sailed, when Begin told Haganah leaders Israel Galili, David Cohen and Levi Shkolnik (now Eshkol) of the arms and men on the Altalena. Ben-Gurion protested the sailing. He saw the arms shipment as a violation of the ceasefire. Katz and Begin say that in an agreement June 1, Begin agreed to give 80% of the arms to the IDF, but he reserved 20% for the Irgunists in the Old City of Jerusalem.[46] At this time, Jerusalem was under seige and the defense of the Jewish sector was undertaken by the Irgun and Stern Gang. Jerusalem was not part of Israel at the time because it had not been conquered by the IDF. Begin felt that Ben-Gurion had no control over Irgun actions in Jerusalem because Ben-Gurion didn't control Jerusalem.[47]

When it arrived in Israel, the Altalena attempted to land its cargo at Kvar Vitkin, a kibutz in northern Israel. The Ben-Gurion government demanded that the Irgun yield all of the arms to the IDF. The Irgun refused. A violent clash took

[45] Ibid, p. 458.

[46] Ibid, p. 463.

[47] Ibid.

place between the Irgun and IDF forces at Kfar Vitkin. The Altalena put to sea once again. As it headed south toward Tel Aviv, the Altalena was shadowed by two Israeli corvettes which would not let the Altalena make for open water. The Altalena's captain finally beached the ship in Tel Aviv off Fishman Street.[48] The Irgun again refused to give up the arms to the IDF. Ben-Gurion cried civil war. In a call to Yigal Allon of the Palmach he said, "We are being faced with an open revolt. Not only is Tel Aviv in danger of falling to the rebel forces, but the future of the state is at stake."[49] In an artillery and small arms battle, the Altalena was sunk by IDF artillery.[50] Casualties were 16 Irgunists killed, 40 wounded, and 2 Haganah killed, 6 wounded.[51]

Katz analyzes the Altalena affair and comes to the conclusion that Begin was at fault for his naivete in believing that Ben-Gurion as the head of the government of Israel could allow Begin's private army, the Irgun, to exist, let alone receive weapons.[52] However, Katz goes further, saying that Ben-Gurion's explanation, designed to calm the pro-Irgunists in the Yishuv was full of holes.

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[48]Katz, p. 248.

[49]Kurzman, p. 473.

[50]Katz, p. 248.

[51]Ibid, p. 246 and Ben-Gurion, p. 169.

[52]Katz, p. 249.

"First, Mr. Ben-Gurion's declared concern for the truce was sheer nonsense. Second, the Irgun had brought the ship to, of all places, Kfar Vitkin, a stronghold of anti-Irgun forces. Third, the fighting men on board [the Altalena] had been landed at Kfar Vitkin and sent away. Fourth, at Tel Aviv, the ship had been fired on after raising the white flag. Finally, men who had abandoned the ship were fired on as they swam to shore."[53]

Begin claims that when the Altalena landed, the Irgun had ceased to exist. It had been integrated into the IDF everywhere except Jerusalem. He claims that the attack on the Altalena was necessary to strengthen Ben-Gurion's position in the Government of Israel.[54] Begin says:

"Official propaganda, hiding behind the smoke screen, pretended that the Irgun had brought over the Altalena in order to prepare an armed revolt against the Government of Israel.

"I must therefore repeat: the Provisional Government knew about the arms ship sailing towards our shores against the instructions which had arrived too late. And it was that Government that decided to bring the Altalena in during the truce period."[55]

Katz summarized that Ben-Gurion manufactured a civil war with Begin over the Altalena to reduce Begin's political power base, his Yishuv popularity, and to destroy the Irgun, thereby eliminating the major threat to Ben-Gurion's rule.[56]

On September 20, 1948, the Irgun was presented with an ultimatum by the Israeli Government. Disband, period.[57] On September

[53] Ibid.

[54] Begin, p. 167.

[55] Ibid, p. 156.

[56] Katz, p. 247.

[57] Ben-Gurion, p. 266.

21, after eleven years of underground and four months of public existence, the Irgun Zvai Leumi disbanded and integrated into the Israeli Defense Forces.[58] The Stern Gang had become part of the I.D.F. on creation of the Jewish state. The subsequent assassination of Count Bernadotte by the "Fatherland Front" cast doubts on the ability of the new Israeli government to control internal terrorism.[59] U.S. special representative, J. G. MacDonald, told Moshe Sharet, "I want the provisional government to realize how important it now is for it to demonstrate its own authority."[60] The Israeli government moved against the Stern Gang with the intent of liquidating it.[61] The Lehi numbers were so small they didn't really pose a threat to the State of Israel. Katz claims the government had plans to attack the Irgun as well as the Stern Gang in the confusion following Bernadotte's assassination.[62] Many Lehi members were given Irgun identification cards by Begin to hide their true affiliation from the Israeli government.[63] After this incident, the war against the Arabs took precedence over the internal conflicts and the weakened dissidents took their programs and policies to the only forum left to them by Ben-Gurion--the Knesset.

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[58] New York Times, 22 September 1945.

[59] Kurzman, p. 566.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Katz, p. 277.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

CHAPTER VI--CONCLUSION

There are three questions which should be answered to bring this study to a conclusion. First, did Jewish terrorism against British and Arabs have its desired effect, that is, the abandonment of the mandate and creation of a Jewish State of Israel? Second, did the British really have an alternative to yielding the mandate? Finally, did the "dissident" groups, the Irgun Zvai Leumi and Lohœmi Herut Israel, pose the threat to Israel that David Ben-Gurion perceived?

Menachem Begin's feelings that terrorism could force the British out of Palestine have already been dealt with in Chapter III. Begin says, "We were convinced of the absolute legality of our illegal actions."[1] Was Begin correct in his assessment that terrorism could force British departure from Palestine? Why did the British leave Palestine?

At no time during the mandate did Jewish forces outnumber or even approach the number of British troops. The British had 100,000 troops in post-war Palestine if one includes police and the British-controlled Arab Legion.[2] At the height of its activity, Haganah numbered 25,000 to 30,000 soldiers who were engaged against two enemies, the British and the Arabs.[3]

[1]Begin, p. 108.

[2]Katz, p. 122.

[3]The Times, 11 December 1947.

Varying numbers exist for the Irgun strength from "less than 20 and never more than 30-40 full-time terrorists;"[4] the British claim of hundreds to thousands;"[5] to Kimche's "2,000 - 3,000 followers."[6] What is most likely is that a mix existed of from 20 to 40 full-time terrorists, complemented by a reserve force of a few hundred fighters available for specific operations, all of whom were supported by a few thousand dedicated sympathizers who were not combatants. On April 25, 1948, the Irgun attacked the Manshiya Quarter of Jaffa in the main Irgun action of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The Irgun force numbered only 600 individuals.[7] The Stern Gang on the other hand claims to have numbered from 250 to 300 terrorists in 1944, which had decreased to 150 in 1947.[8] Had more Irgunists existed, they most certainly would have been used in the attack. There were 60,000 Arabs in the Manshiya Quarter.

Since simple numbers gave the British an implied superiority, there were other factors which contributed to Great Britain's withdrawal from Palestine. World War II had been concluded at a great cost to Britain and Churchill echoed British popular opinion when he remarked:

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[4]Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 419.

[5]Begin, p. 61.

[6]Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 419 and Begin, p. 61.

[7]Begin, p. 354.

[8]Center for Research in Social Systems.

> "One hundred thousand Englishmen are being kept away from their homes and work by a senseless, squalid war with the Jews. We are getting ourselves hated and mocked by the world at a cost of eighty millions."[9]

This expenditure of £80 million referred to by Churchill could ill be afforded by the Britons. The winter of 1947 was one of the coldest in European history and, in addition to the economic dislocation caused by the war, Britain was at the height of a coal shortage caused more by a lack of miners to dig the fuel rather than a lack of coal.[10] In addition, there was a morale problem among British troops in Palestine, who felt service in Palestine was not really desirable.[11]

Christopher Sykes, the one dissenting voice in the literature covered, holds the view that the terrorist groups weren't a factor in the creation of Israel. "Seen from a distance, Irgun Zvai Leumi and the followers of Abraham Stern count to the Jewish national cause as a pure loss."[12]

Rabbi Dr. Silver (pro-Irgun), however, defends the terrorists: "The Irgun will go down in history as a factor without which the State of Israel would not have come into being."[13] The most lucid conclusion available on the effects of the terrorism comes from a potentially more impartial source, the Center for Research in Social Systems.

[9]Katz, p. 127.

[10]Ibid, p. 122.

[11]Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 413.

[12]Sykes, p. 375.

[13]Begin, p. 316.

"Though the final solution to the Palestine question was in greater part political, it was the militant Jewish insurgency that created the climate and maintained the pressure which led to this political solution. Only through this pressure were the British forced to seek solutions outside of their own sphere of control and pass the problem to the United Nations. Whether the Jewish state of Israel would have come into being without the insurgency is very doubtful.

"In summary, the insurgency can be credited with a number of achievements, all of which helped to attain the common objective of the three insurgency groups--the formation of the state of Israel. It forced the British to undertake heavy commitments in Palestine, commitments which they were not ready to maintain over an indefinite period. It focused world attention on Palestine and its attendant problems, including the plight of the remnants of European Jewry who were still in displaced persons camps. It built throughout the Yishuv cohesion and a sense of purpose--which increased rather than decreased under British efforts to break the insurgency and which was required for creating the state of Israel. It created a climate of uncertainty and fear which demoralized the British serving in Palestine and eroded the British will both in Palestine and in the United Kingdom, so that by 1947 the British government was willing to accept any graceful--or even not so graceful--escape from a situation promising nothing but increasing embarrassment."[14]

Thus, the consensus on the first question is: Yes, Jewish terrorism did have its desired effect in contributing heavily to the removal of the British from Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state of Israel.

Next, did an alternative to abandonment of the mandate exist for the British? Theoretically, yes. Practically, no. British High Commissioner, General Cunningham, said there were

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[14]Center for Research in Social Systems, p. 425.

no means of destroying the Jewish underground except by the application of military force against the entire population, but unlike the Germans, the British couldn't use those tactics.[15] In Great Britain, only a violent hatred could have condoned violent action in Palestine but such hatred didn't exist.[16] Fellow Europeans, recovering from "the nightmare of German occupation" would see British excesses in Palestine as a "resumption of Hitler's work."[17] The Irgun was fully aware of this phenomenon of world opinion:

> "Palestine was a glass house watched with interest by the rest of the world. The British Government had discovered in 1945 that their behavior toward the Jews was an important factor in American attitudes and policies. American good will and economic aid were vital to Britain's revival from the ravages of war."[18]

As Begin said, "Arms were our weapons of attack; the transparency of the 'glass' was a shield of defense."[19]

Lenczowski comments that the British were also "outclassed" by the Yishuv. They were "somewhat at a loss facing the well-educated European and often sophisticated Zionist community... The average Jewish intellectual ...was more highly educated, and perhaps more intelligent, than his British counterpart in the Palestine administration..."[20]

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[15] Begin, p. 53.

[16] Katz, p. 110.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Begin, p. 56.

[20] Lenczowski, George, The Middle East in World Affairs, p. 321, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1956.

The Yishuv effectiveness against the British administration was also evident in the cohesiveness of the Yishuv which protected the terrorists. Begin said, "The depth of an open underground is measured by the sympathy of its people for the struggle."[21] The British found it extremely difficult to obtain Yishuv cooperation. Britain couldn't penetrate the Yishuv. Sir Edward Grigg (Lord Altrincham) said, "The primary cause of our failure in Palestine was the failure of our Intelligence Service."[22] Based on the partial consensus developed above, the answer to the second question must be: no, there were no practically affordable alternatives available to the Government of Great Britain.

Finally, were the terrorists a threat to the state of Israel? This question has an undetermined answer. Inasmuch as the terrorist actions after the partition of Palestine and especially after the declaration of the State cast doubts as to Ben-Gurion's ability to control events within Israel, yes, the terrorists did threaten the state. But, at the same time, it would seem Ben-Gurion felt challenged politically and equated the survival of the state of Israel with the continuation of the rule of Ben-Gurion and as a result he felt that a threat against his personal power was treason against Israel.

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[21]Begin, p. 109.

[22]Ibid, p. 132.

At the same time, Begin's protests about not wanting political power do not ring true either. In 1948, Begin transformed the military Irgun into the Herut (Freedom) Party.[23] He was still an important influence in the Knesset in the 1956, 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars. He vigorously opposed the return of any and all lands won in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War[24] and demanded the transfer of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.[25] His party's recent victory over the Labour Party in Spring 1977 catapulted him into the Prime Minister's Office. He has not shown any appreciable change in his radical Zionist beliefs since he wrote them down in The Revolt in 1951.

A reasonable synthesis is that the threat of a civil war was not as great as Ben-Gurion said it was, yet Menachem Begin's motives weren't as simple as Begin himself espouses. His actual goals may have just been realized after 30 years in the Knesset as a member of the loyal opposition.

A true conclusion is virtually impossible to obtain when dealing with the cause-and-effect relationships of human behavior. There is no control group against which to measure the historical occurrences. There are a multitude of variables which interact to produce a given occurrence, none of which can be isolated

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[23]Levine and Shimoni, p. 138.

[24]Kurzman, p. 716.

[25]Foreign Broadcast Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C., 22 July 1976.

and studied. The three historical tracks of the Haganah, the Irgun and the Stern Gang did not operate separately. They had the same origin, the same cause, and the same finish. In between the beginning and the end, their courses intersected, crossed, intertwined and deflected one another. A study of one group is necessarily a study of the other two, a study which, complicated as it is, is not isolated from other international events.

The gravest error would be to draw a quick conclusion, apply generalizations to the historical events, and imply that the Jewish terrorists created a pattern which any nationalist movement could follow as a blueprint in order to gain their independence. Each historical case is unique. The Jewish terrorists played a significant part in the creation of the state of Israel, but it would not be wise to draw a parallel with today's terrorists, such as the Irish Republican Army or the Palestine Liberation Organization. Each on its individual merits, the Haganah, the Irgun Avai Leumi and the Lohamei Herut Israel can be called heroes of the Jewish revolt only because their revolution was successful, and history tends to favor the victor.

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